Prevalence and Risk Factors for Abuse among Saudi Females, KSA

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ABSTRACT
Background: Domestic violence against Saudi women is arising recently. Also, statistics indicate that married women are the largest segment of abuse victims in Saudi society.
Objectives: Estimating the prevalence of female abuse allover Saudi Arabia as well as assessing the most important factors associated with abuse.
Methods: The survey was conducted during the period from January to April 2017. The study population consisted of 758Saudi Arabian females from thirteen governorates of Saudi Arabia. A self-administrated questionnaire that consists of 3 scales including demographics of females and husband's and the perception of women toward causes of abuse, frequency and types was distributed among participants. **Results:** The prevalence of abuse among the studied population was 32%%. The most common risk factors for being abused were addiction to drugs and alcohol. The majority of women reported minor physical abuse.About 40.5% of women asked for divorce after abuse. Being divorced, low educated, jobless, polygamy family were considerably associated with being abused. Illiterate husbands, jobless and low income were shown to be the most important male variables that were associated with abuse.
Conclusion: The abuse showed a high prevalence rate (36%) indicating high ignorance of female rights as well as increasing the range of abuse allover KSA. The most significant factors associated with abuse were being working, low education of female and husband. Also, non-working husbands and poor income were related to high abuse levels.
Keywords: Wife, Abuse, Physical, KSA.

INTRODUCTION

The worldwide prevalence of abuse was a focus of many researchers as well as national surveys for studding its causes and impacts on the mental as well as physical health status of women [1-3].The overall prevalent rates of abuse varied from 10-50% with different rates from developed and developing countries and the studies were conducted in emergency departments, community based or international surveys as well as police records [4-6].

In KSA, its prevalence is increasing dramatically ranging from 39 % to 58% with several types as physical and emotional abuse[5, 6]. However being a serious problem, violence is a hidden problem in Arabic and Islamic countries and most of abused females didn't tell health care providers that they were abused [1].

The factors related with abuse in KSA may be unfamiliarity with the rights of women, there are several causes of domestic violence in Saudi Arabia such as ignorance regarding women's rights, and social approval of violence[1, 7, 8].Also, abused women reported many obstacles after being abused to express their feeling, can't report being abused, social habits and traditions in addition to privacy of family; thus women escape through pursuing divorce as the only solution [1, 9]. This study aimed to evaluate the prevalence of physical wife abuse among teachers of intermediate schools in KSA.

METHODS
Study design and population

A quantitative, cross-sectional study was conducted in Saudi Arabia, a Middle-Eastern country with an estimated population of 31,742,308 people according to the General Authority for Statistics, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

(2016 estimate)[10]. The survey was conducted during the period from January to April 2017. The studied population consisted of Saudi Arabian females from thirteen governorates of Saudi Arabia: Al-Riyadh, Makkah Al-Mokarramah, Al-Madinah Al-Monawarah, Al-Qaseem, Eastern Region, Aseer, Tabuk, Hail, Northern Borders, Jazan, Najran, Al-Baha and Al-Jouf.The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and national and institutional standards. Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the "Human Ethical Committee, Ministry of Health, Saudi Arabia".

The sample size was based on the assumption that the proportions of response to most of the main questions is 50%, as both responses and response rates were completely unknown due to the fact there are no previous similar studies from Saudi Arabia or other GCC countries. It was determined using the Raosoft sample size calculator using a margin of error of 5%, a confidence interval of 95%, a population size of 9839320 Saudi females, and an expected response of 50% [11]. The minimum sample size estimated for the study was 385. Assuming a response rate of 50%, a larger sample size of 790 Saudi females were enrolled in the study. The studied population was selected from a number of different venues in Saudi Arabia in order to increase the generalizability of the findings. Saudi Arabia nationals from all Health Sciences Centre females were approached to participate in the study.

In the first stage of selection, a stratified random sampling was used to select Saudi females randomly out of thirteen governorates in Saudi Arabia according to their population density in the different regions as the following: Al-Riyadh;177, Makkah Al-Mokarramah:176 Al-Madinah Al-Monawarah:54 Al-Qaseem:39 Eastern Region:119

Aseer:70 Tabouk:28 Hail:21 Northern Borders:11 Jazan:47 Najran:17 Al-Baha:16 Al-Jouf:15.

Exclusion criteria were expatriates (non-Saudi) residents, age less than 20, single women. Also, 32 subjects were excluded due to uncompleted data in the questionnaire.

Study tools

An interview with all included females was done for half an hour with each female separately then self-administrated questionnaire was distributed among the included subjects. This questionnaire consists of 3 scales including demographics of females and husband'sand the perception of women toward causes of abuse, frequency and types. The study was done after approval of ethical board of King Abdulaziz University and an informed written consent was taken from each participant in the study.

Statistical analysis

Data were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 24, SPSS, Chicago, IL, U.S.A.) and descriptive analysis conducted. Chi square, Fisher exact and ANOVA were used. Statistical significance was accepted at $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of females:
The demographics of included females and husband were shown in tables 1 and 2. Also, using multivariable logistic regression model, being divorced, low educated, jobless, polygamy family were considerably associated with being abused. On the other hand, illiterate husbands, jobless and low income were shown to be the most important variables that were associated with abuse (Table 3).

Table (1): Socio-Demographic Characteristics of respondent females (n=758)

	Non-abused (n=505)		Physical abused (n=253)		OR 95%CI	P-value
	No.	%	No.	%		
18–29	149	62.1	91	37.9	Reference	0.718
30–44	245	68.4	113	31.6	0.92 (0.6–2.48)	0.622
45–64	111	69.4	49	30.6	0.61 (0.44–1.11)	0.751
Widowed	109	77.9	31	22.1	Reference	< 0.0001
Divorced	122	59.5	83	40.5	3.84 (1.8–4.8)	< 0.0001
Married	211	60.3	139	39.7	3.01 (2.04–5.61)	< 0.0001
Duration of marriage (Yr)	10.1±5.7		11.4±6		1.02 (0.29–3.51)	0.805
Monogamy	294	80.5	71	19.5	1	< 0.0001
Polygamy	211	53.7	182	46.3	16.43 (4.91–21.01)	
None	91	61.1	58	38.9	Reference	0.917
one	125	65.1	67	34.9	0.91 (0.28–3.01)	0.851
>1	289	69.3	128	30.7	0.38 (0.47–4.88)	0.934
Employed	351	78.2	98	21.8	1	< 0.0001
Jobless	154	49.8	155	50.2	21.13 (8.32–25.93)	
College	114	79.7	29	20.3	Reference	< 0.0001
Primary-Secondary	225	70.1	96	29.9	4.12 (1.53-6.29)	< 0.0001
Illiterate	166	56.5	128	43.5	21.13 (8.32–25.93)	< 0.0001

Table (2): Socio-Demographic Characteristics of husband

	Non-abused (n=505)		Physical abused (n=253)		OR 95%CI	P-value
	No.	%	No.	%		
22–32	178	65.7	93	34.3	Reference	0.434
33–43	226	68.1	106	31.9	0.51 (0.18-1.43)	0.201
44–53	101	65.2	54	34.8	0.97 (0.29-3.23)	0.957
College	214	89.9	24	10.1	Reference	<0.0001
Primary-Secondary	198	60.6	129	39.4	7.14 (1.92-9.28)	<0.0001
Illiterate	93	47.4	103	52.6	15.88 (5.61-23.41)	<0.0001
Civil	246	85.1	43	14.9	Reference	<0.0001
Military	198	69.0	89	31.0	12.82(9.06–21.48)	<0.0001
Jobless	141	49.8	142	50.2	23.31(11.44–20.72)	<0.0001
High	198	78.9	53	21.1	Reference	<0.0001
Medium	192	62.7	114	37.3	14.31 (11.6–19.58)	<0.0001
Low	115	57.2	86	42.8	16.42 (10.03–21.66)	<0.0001

Table (3): Variable retained in multivariable logistic regression model

Variables	OR	95%CI	P-value
Female Variables			
Marital status	5.71	3.31-9.84	< 0.0001
Marriage type	8.46	5.09-14.05	< 0.0001
Employment	1.73	1.08-2.75	0.021
Education	4.12	1.53-6.29	< 0.0001
Male Variables			
Education	2.58	1.35-4.94	0.004
Employment	5.62	2.06-15.36	<0.0001
Income Level	2.85	1.57-5.16	<0.0001

Prevalence, frequency and types of physical wife abuse

The overall prevalence of physical abuse was 32% (Fig. 1).The frequency of abuse was weekly in 37.5% and monthly in 19.8% of subjects indicating high frequency of abuse during the study. However, 40.3% of subjects were beaten yearly and only 2.4% of females were physically abused daily (Table 4).As for the types of abuse, the majority of participants revealed having minor incidents of abuse and this was shown in table 5.
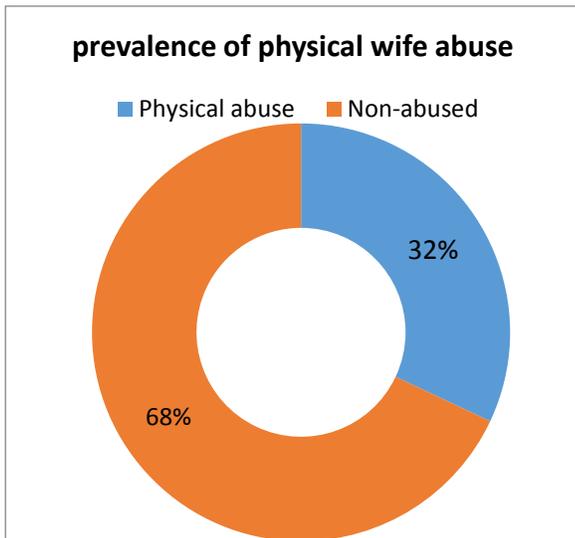

Fig. (1): Prevalence of physical abuse among included subjects

Table (4): Frequency of physical abuse

Frequency of beat	No.	%
Daily	6	2.4
Weekly	95	37.5
Monthly	50	19.8
Yearly	102	40.3

Table (5): Distribution of Saudi Arabian women by type of physical violence experienced during the marriage period (n =253)

Incidents of physical abuse	No.	%
Minor		
Pushed/shoved	57	22.6
Slapped on the face	58	23.0
Twisted arms/pulled hair	51	20.2
Pulled	47	18.6
Something thrown that could hurt	41	16.2
Severe		
Slammed against wall	35	13.8
Kicked	27	10.7
Hit by something that could hurt	27	10.7
Choked	20	8
Punched	19	7.5
Scalded or burnt	11	4.3

Factors affecting physical abuse

The most important variables pushing for abuse from women's point of view were drug and alcohol addiction in 94.8% and 91.3% of participants, respectively then followed by social stressors (88.1), poor income, (87%), unfaithfulness (87%).On the other hand, factors as sexual refusal and jealousy as well as number of children represents the minor factors for abuse (Table 6).

Table (6): Reasons of violence as given by wife (n = 253)

Drugs use	240 (94.8%)
Alcohol use	231 (91.3%)
Social stressors	223 (88.1%)
Poor income	220 (87%)
Unfaithfulness	210 (87%)
Sexual refusal	102 (40.3%)
Jealousy	95 (37.5%)
NUMBER OF CHILDREN	81 (32%)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The prevalence of abuse in many studies was found to be intensely growing with high rates ranging from 39 % to 58%[5, 6] but it is still a hidden problem in our community[1]. In the present study, the physical abuse prevalence was high in Saudi women at PHCCS allover KSA. This was close to other studies in KSA reporting a high prevalence of abuse in PHCCs in eastern region of KSA [12]. Correspondingly, the life span frequency of different types of abuse was assessed to be 34% in almost 2,300women of different nationalities going to Jeddah tertiary care hospitals [13].

However, lower rates were found in other studies in KSA as in Al-Madina Al-Monawara[1, 7] and in Taif, KSA [14]. Also, a significantly lower rates (3.9%) were found in 5 Nordic countries in abused women admitted to gynaecology clinics[6]. In emergency departments of USA, the abuse was 14.4% among women [15]. This difference in the prevalence rate could be illustrated as different study setting, characteristics and period of study.

The consequences of abuse pushed 40.5% of women to ask for divorce but 59.5% preferred to continue marriage. However, higher levels of divorce were reported in other studies but also indicate that the majority of women prefer divorce than being insulted [16-19].

The majority of women thought that poor income, addiction to drugs and alcohol were the most common factors participating in violence against wife. But the number of children, jealousy of husband and sexual refusal were the least common causes of abuse in the present study. Consistent results showed that the use of drug and alcohol is significantly associated with abuse against wife[20, 21].

The abuse in this study was reported to be significantly associated with being less educated, low income, polygamy, and non-working husbands as well as husbands working in military jobs. In the same respect, socio-demographic characteristics as poor income, low husband education, were significantly reported to be linked with violence against women in many studies [13, 22]. In addition to that poor and insufficient economic status with close association to low husband education were found to result in stress environment and frustration of family which trigger abuse against wife and children [14, 22-24]. Similarly, polygamy was also found to be associated with violence in many studies [8, 13, 14, 25, 26].

CONCLUSION

The abuse showed a high prevalence rate (36%) indicating high ignorance of female rights as well as increasing the range of abuse allover KSA but this is against Islamic teaching and many husbands are convinced that beating women is a good way for improving the wife misbehavior. The most significant factors associated with abuse were being working, first years of marriage, low education of female and husband. Also, non-working husbands was related to high abuse levels.

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