

# Social Predictors of Domestic Violence against Married Men: The Case of Mashhad (Iran)

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## Abstract

**Background:** One of the most important social phenomenon regard to family issues is domestic violence against men. The present study aimed to investigate social predictors of domestic violence against married men in 2018 in Mashhad, Iran.

**Methods:** In this study cross-sectional, 300 married women from Mashhad were selected based on multi-stage cluster sampling, which made-researcher questionnaire was used in order to measure the variables of domestic violence against men and social predictors.

**Results:** Descriptive results revealed that the mean of domestic violence against men through women was (18.16 ±19.30) in a range of 0 -100, which it seems mild. There were significant relationships ( $p < 0.01$ ) between witnessing violence, violence experience, feeling injustice, violence function, life satisfaction and domestic violence against men. Finally, those factors accounted for 60 percent variance of violence against men.

**Conclusion:** It was found out that the rate of domestic violence against men was low, men do not perceive many behaviors of their wives as violence, and the most important factor leading to this situation was violence experience among married women.

**Keywords:** Domestic Violence; Social Predictors; Married Men; Women as Perpetrators; Mashhad

## Introduction

Today domestic violence (DV) is one the most important problem among Iranian family. DV is sometimes defined as spousal abuse, marital violence, abuse, partnering (Straus, 1993) [1]. The Home Office defines DV as “any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behavior, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality”. It also can be psychological, physical, sexual or emotional and financial (Nowinski & Bowen, 2012) [2]. Before the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, DV has largely focused on women as the victims but since then DV against men has been taken into account as well (Sadeghi-Fasaei, 2017) [3]. Office for National statistics (2016) in the UK reported that 8.2% of women and 4.0% of men in England and Wales reported domestic abuse in the last year, equivalent to a likely 1.3 million female and 600,000 male victims [4].

Most of the studies in Iran and the Middle East in recent years are generally based on DV against women. However, there have been a few studies regarding with DV against men. In a study carried out in Iran, 69.1% of men and 74.3% of women were subject to physical violence; 72.6% of men and 73.5% of women suffered from psychological aggression; 46.5% of men and 53% of women had been sexually assaulted; 62.6% of men and 63% of women were subject to injury (Mohammadkhani, Rezaee, Azadmehr, & Mohammadi, 2006) [5]. The results of another study in Iran which involved 40 couples referring to family courts showed that when conflicts arise, men usually use physical violence and women use psycho-emotional violence to make their point (Pournaghash-Tehrani & Tashk, 2007) [6]. Pournaghash Tehrani and Faizabad (2007) found that men who were victims of physical violence were more educated and had better income than those who were the victims of psychological violence. According to a survey in Canada (2004), 6% of males being physically or sexually victimized by their partners. The United States Department of Justice in a study of 16,000 Americans showed 7.4% of men reported being physically assaulted by a current or former spouse, cohabiting partner, boyfriend or girlfriend, or date in their lifetime.

There may be some social factors behind DV against men through women. Pournaghash-Tehrani and Feizabadi (2007) showed that the variables of age, education had significant effect on physical and psychological violence [6]. Some studies have shown that low socioeconomic level, low income, unstable employment status, number of children at home, alcohol abuse and poor environmental level contribute in domestic violence (Hindin & Adair, 2002; Gage, 2005; Perez et al, 2006; Wen et al, 2003) [7-10].

A study was conducted among Thai Muslim married couples in Pattani province indicated that five predictors of DV were strict upbringing, violent behavior in childhood, females inferior status, severe punishment in childhood and male dominance (Laeheem & Boonprakarn, 2017) [11]. Also, Choi and Hyun (2016) assessed predictors variables of DV among husbands in multicultural families reporting self-control, social support, violence experience, Acculturative stress and dysfunctional communication as predictors of DV [12].

As it can be seen from past research, there have been a limit number of studies around DV against men, it also interesting to note that hardly ever in those studies have been considered what social factors are responsible for this issue. Therefore, the present study addressed social determinants of DV against married men.

## Methodology

This is a cross-sectional (descriptive- Explanatory) study, conducted in Mashhad, Iran in 2018. The population encompasses all married women who were resident in Mashhad, which 300 of them were selected as a sample size with rely on multi-stage cluster sampling. A researcher-made questionnaire was designed to assess DV against married men and other independents variables. The questionnaire of violence against men consisted 17 items in three components (including 3 items assessing sexual, 6 items assessing psychological and 5 items assessing physical violence) based on a 5 point Likert-type scale with options of 5= always and 1= never. Independents variables were 5 (including feeling injustice 3 items, life satisfaction 6 items, witnessing violence 11 items, violence experience 13 items and violence function 7 items based on a 5 items Likert-type scale). All the variables were located on a range of 0 to 100 for better analysis. The validity of those variables was supplied through content validity and reliability was measured via Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

Variable	Type of variable	Alpha
Domestic violence against men	Dependent	0/938
Feeling injustice	Independent	0/826
Life satisfaction	Independent	0/757
Violence experience	Independent	0/902
Witnessing violence	Independent	0/889
Violence function	Independent	0/782

Table 1: Cronbach's alpha coefficients

SPSS software was used to analyze the data in two parts (descriptive and Inferential). In the first section descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used. In the second part, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to investigate the relationship between all independent variables and the dependent variable and its components, and multiple linear regression analysis was used to determine the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable (Table 1).

## Results

Variable	Frequency(n)	Percent (%)
<b>Age</b>		
18 to 31	123	41.0
32 to 44	135	45.0
45 and over	42	14.0
<b>Qualification of husband</b>		
Under diploma	207	69.0
Diploma	57	19.0
Graduate	33	11.0
Postgraduate	3	1.0
<b>Qualification of wife</b>		
Under diploma	159	53.0
Diploma	90	30.0
Graduate	42	14.0
Postgraduate	9	3.0
<b>Occupation of husband</b>		
Unemployment	5	1.6
Private job	221	73.6

<b>Occupation of husband</b>		
Government gob	69	23.2
Retired	5	1.6
<b>Occupation of wife</b>		
House wife	240	80.0
Private job	54	18.0
Government gob	3	1.0
Retired	3	1.0
<b>Duration of marriage (years)</b>		
5 and lower	63	21.0
6 to 10	60	20.0
11 to 15	54	18.0
16 and over	123	41.0

**Table 2:** Distribution of sample according to demographic variables

Table 2, Majority of the subjects 258(86%) were aged 44 and lower, 207(69.0%) of subjects' qualification of husbands were under diploma, qualification of women, 159 (53.0%) were under diploma, 90(30%) diploma, 42(14.0%) graduate and 9(3.0%) were postgraduate. The Majority of occupation of women, 240(80%) were House wife, and for their husbands, 5(1.6%) were unemployment, 221(73.6%) in private job, 69(23.2%) in Government job and 5(1.6%) were retired. Finally, duration of respondents' marriage for 63 (21.1%) was 5 and lower, 60 (20.0%) was 6 to 10, 54 (18.0%) was 11 to 15, and 123 (41.0%) was 16 and over.

Variable	M	SD
<b>Domestic violence against men</b>	18/16	19/30
<b>Sexual violence</b>	21.09	24.73
<b>Psychological violence</b>	20.58	18.79
<b>Physical violence</b>	13.78	18.14
<b>Feeling injustice</b>	45/95	25/26
<b>Life satisfaction</b>	61/83	19/65
<b>Violence experience</b>	18/40	16/52
<b>Witnessing violence</b>	23/83	17/33
<b>violence function</b>	38/25	19/74

**Table 3:** Descriptive statistics for study variables (n = 300)

Table 3, indicated that the average score of DV against men was (18.16), and its components; sexual violence (21.09), psychological violence (20.58), and physical violence (13.78). The results also showed that the average score of feeling injustice of women was (45.95), life satisfaction (61.83), violence experience (18.40), witnessing violence (23.83), and violence function was (38.25).

Violence against men	Frequency	Percent (%)
<b>Mild</b>	222	76.3
<b>Moderate</b>	60	20.6
<b>Sever</b>	9	3.1

**Table 4:** Distribution of domestic violence

Table 4, showed that DV against 222(76.3%) of men was mild, 60(20.6%) was moderate and there was just 9 (3.1%) severe DV against men.

According to Table 5, it can be seen that there were significant relationships between all variables except for two relationships (sexual violence and violence function; feeling injustice and violence function). It was observable that feeling injustice and sexual violence ( $R= 0.41, P< 0.01$ ); violence experience and psychological violence( $R= 0.64, P< 0.01$ ); violence experience and physical violence( $R= 0.54, P< 0.01$ ) had the strongest correlations together.

	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	<b>Violence against men</b>	-	.62**	.97**	.66**	.45**	-.49**	.65**	.60**	.20**
2.	<b>Sexual violence</b>		-	.58**	.34**	.41**	-.40**	.39**	.30**	.01
3.	<b>Psychological violence</b>			-	.68**	.44**	-.41**	.64**	.57**	.23**
4.	<b>Physical violence</b>				-	.25**	-.06	.54**	.50**	.18**

	Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5.	Feeling injustice					-	.35**	.18**	.19**	.02
6.	Life satisfaction						-	-.32**	-.24**	-.19**
7.	Violence experience							-	.74**	.21**
8.	Witnessing violence								-	.25**
9.	Violence function									-

\*\*p &lt; .01    \*p &lt; .05

Table 5: Correlation among study variables

Multiple regression analysis results relating to prediction of DV against men are shown in Table 6. It was found that independents variables predicted 60% of variance of DV against men. It also interesting to note that all independents variables except for violence function had significant effect on DV against men, which violence experience had the largest effect on DV against men ( $\beta = .359$ ,  $P < .000$ ).

Variance	B	Standard error	Beta	T	P
Stable coefficient	.735	.238		2.963	.003
Life satisfaction	-.231	.042	-.235	-5.501	.000
Violence experience	.421	.069	.359	6.089	.000
Feeling injustice	.178	.031	.241	5.834	.000
Witnessing violence	.257	.065	.228	3.967	.000
Violence function	.019	.039	.019	.497	.619

DW: 1.805    R: .783    R<sup>2</sup>: .604    F: 85.278    p < .001

Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis Results Relating to Prediction of Violence against men

## Discussion

The prevalence of DV against men was totally low in this cross-sectional study. This result was consonant with other studies both in Iran and foreign countries. Ferozajian (2014) in a study in Iran (Babul) found that 68.8% of DV against men was mild and only 3.1% of men reported high level of violence. Another research has been done in the city of Varanasi (India) by Srivastava (2014) showed that majority of men had mild and moderate DV. It is also interesting to note that in our study among three components of violence, sexual violence (Mean= 21.36) was reported more than others. One of the most outstanding reasons is that the perspective of men related to sex has been changed because of sexual revolution. While in the past sexual relationships among Iranian families was confined to reproduction, today men would prefer to have a pleasurable sexual relationship.

This study found four predictors of DV against men: life satisfaction, violence experience, feeling injustice and witnessing violence. The results showed that violence experience was the most important predictor of DV against men. According to Stets (1990) [13], people who have experienced violence during their life are highly more likely to show violent behaviors against their spouses than others. Witnessing violence was another significant predictor of violence. Observing and experiencing violence in individual youth is positively related to behave violently in adulthood (Hotaling & Sugarman, 1986) [14]. It has been found by Mabanglo (2002) that children who observe violence in their childhood show higher violence than who did not witness DV [15]. Terra and (2017) in a systematic review stated that children who grew up in the families where violence is more common they were at higher risks to use violence as a functional solution to tackle some their problems. This relation can be explained through the process of social learning.

Satisfaction with life had a negative effect on violence against men. In fact, this find indicated that wives who satisfied with their life it were less likely to be violent with their husbands in deal with. Married couples who feel positively to their relationships and partners can result in relationship commitment helping couples to have more pleasurable family relations. Satisfaction with life help couples to decrease negative emotions, and it is a fundamental element of subjective well-being enabling partners to control the symptoms of violence (Veronese, 2017) [16]. Feeling injustice was another social predictor of DV against men. In fact, it showed that when women feel equality both in personal and social life, they may act violently against their spouses in different, or conflict situations. In Iran, women have fewer rights than men in various situation such as social, economic and cultural fields, as a result, they have a sense of deprivation during their life which it causes they act violently in some occasions like family issues against men [17-19].

## Conclusion

In general, the overall prevalence of domestic violence against married men was mild. But, the thing was that among three components of domestic violence, sexual violence was more common than others. This means that sex and the quality of sex is a crucial matter for males, which shows that sexual expectations have been changed in the recent years. As a result, it is so necessary for government as a total, mass media, volunteer organizations and institutions to formulate a serious policy for increasing the awareness of married women from their husband's sexual demands.

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