

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DURING PANDEMIC COVID-19: AN INSIGHT

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Abstract: *The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase in reports of sexual and domestic abuse against women and children across the globe. Isolation, restricted movement and stay-at-home measures trap family members together. The probability that women and their children may experience violence has significantly increased as spending more time together leads to an increase household stress, and the risk even greater when families must additionally deal with possible financial or employment losses. In light of the fact that the number of cases of domestic violence and abuse is increasing at a rate comparable to covid-19, some of the experts considered this outbreak as a "shadow pandemic." The public can be effectively shielded from the contagious COVID-19 by implementing lockdown orders but since they are trapped with their perpetrators, it is a nightmare for domestic violence victims.*

Keywords: *Covid-19, Lockdown, Pandemic, Domestic Violence, Household Stress*

Introduction

According to WHO (2020), Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19, is an infection that is caused by a newly identified coronavirus. The very first case of coronavirus disease was reported in 2019 during a respiratory virus outbreak in Wuhan, China and WHO declared the COVID-19 outbreak a global health emergency in January 2020 (Cannimo, 2021). Governments started implementing stay-at-home or shelter-in-place orders to help limit the spread of the virus as the coronavirus pandemic wreaked havoc on the lives and economies of countries all over the world.

Lockdowns and quarantines are crucial for containing COVID-19, but they can also imprison women in abusive relationships. We have witnessed a horrific rise in domestic violence, as social and economic pressures and fear have increased (UN Women, 2020). Even if these orders had the best of intentions, the fact that they restricted people from their friends, families, schools, and workplaces—the latter of which was severely affected by closed businesses and

rising unemployment—tended to make people more stressed and anxious. Although these orders appeared to be very prudent from a public health perspective, there was also concern that they might lead to other undesirable outcomes, such as domestic violence, in large part because they were now confined to their homes without access to people who might be able to recognize the warning signs of violence and get the help they needed to escape abuse situations. Immediately after media headlines focusing on lockdown orders, an increase in domestic violence globally reported (Amanda Taub, 2020). Using past literature, this paper aim to express the scenario of domestic violence during pandemic covid-19 lockdown for better insight.

Literature Review

Understanding Domestic Violence

According to Garca-Moreno et al. (2015), domestic violence is now acknowledged as a clinical and public health concern of pandemic proportions. Domestic violence is characterised as a pattern of conduct in a relationship in which the abuser makes several attempts to exert control over his victim (WHO, 2012). On top of that, domestic violence against women and girls is any gender-based act that harms or is likely to harm women or girls physically, sexually, or mentally, including threats of such actions, harassment, or the unreasonable restriction of freedom, whether in public or private life (UN, 2013).

Furthermore, DK Randawar et. al. (2018) mentioned that some women experience severe physical abuse, and that many of those women are also the victims of economic exploitation. These women often also endure repeated verbal abuse, humiliation, sexual coercion, and other forms of psychological abuse. Moreover, Garcia-Moreno et al. (2015) stated that domestic violence also refers to harmful cultural practices like early forced marriage, female genital mutilation, and honour killings as well as intimate partner violence, rape, sexual harassment, and other forms of sexual violence committed by someone other than a partner.

According to SAM Idris et. al (2018), the effects of domestic abuse are far-reaching. They range from negative effects on physical health to psychological and emotional issues. Women who have suffered intimate partner violence are 1.5 times more likely to contract HIV, syphilis, chlamydia, or gonorrhoea, as well as 1.5 times more likely to have depression, alcohol use disorders, low birth weight babies, and depression life (UN, 2013). In addition, the study's findings showed that 42% of women who had experienced physical or sexual abuse at the hands of a spouse had experienced injuries as a result. In addition, 38% of all female homicides worldwide were reportedly committed by their intimate relationships. Furthermore, researchers found that the most extreme mental instability brought on by domestic abuse could result in suicide ideation (G.Dillion, 2013).

Triggered Risen Cases

New Zealand, which successfully eradicated all cases of the covid-19 over a month after enacting severe national lockdown measures, serves as an example of how lockdown tactics can be effective in combating the infection (Cousins S., 2020). However, domestic violence reports have grown significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown (Graham-Harrison E., 2020). According to J.Usta (2021), the rise in violence was driven along by rising domestic tension, a rise in the risk factors for violence among perpetrators, the stress of rising debt, and survivors' restricted access to the support services that were available before lockdown. The

COVID-19 response strategy prevented the virus from spreading, but it made it harder for women to confront with perpetrators.

People are being forced to stay at home during a lockdown, which gives families extra time to spend together. This is strengthening relationships but also escalating stress levels, tensions, and conflicts, especially when individuals are unusually bound together all day (O'Halloran M., 2020). As reports around the world shows that the threat post by Movement Control Order due to Covid-19 pandemic cut across both developed and developing societies stated that from the United States, China, Brazil, and Australia indicates increases in intimate partner, women, and children violence due to isolation and quarantine (K Usher et. al., 2020).

While in United Kingdom has also registered concerns about increase in domestic violence (C Bradbury et. al., 2020). New worries over domestic violence victims spending more time with their abusers have arisen as a result of lockdown. It is also noted, rising unemployment rates and unpredictable economic conditions may make it harder for potential victims to escape, resulting in a persistently harmful situation. As the pandemic continues, rising levels of stress, fear, and financial hardship could cause offenders to lash out, resulting in even more frequent serious domestic violence incidents.

Hotline Extrapolated

According to Ortiz-b. (2020), just three weeks after the social distance policy was announced, calls relating to domestic abuse to Mexico's 911 emergency number increased by 60%, and federal officials estimated an increase in violence against women of between 30% and 100%. Another study in India by S Nigam (2020) stated that they received between 1,000 and 1,200 calls per day, up from between 900 and 1,000 before the lockdown. He added, about 2,500 cases were filed during the lockdown in New Delhi alone.

Furthermore, Wagers (2020) emphasized similar reports of increases in domestic violence incidences range from 21% to 35% in several American states. While in Australia, Google reported a 75% increase in internet searches for domestic abuse support [15] and on top of that reports from the same state claimed that domestic violence call-outs increase by 5% in some regions of the nation (Kagi, 2020).

In fact, during the implementation of stay-at-home order in United Kingdom, the National Domestic Abuse Hotline reported a 25% rise in calls, and some deaths associated with domestic violence were recorded (K Usher et. al., 2020). Consequently, domestic violence reports surged from 32% to 36% in France after the implementation of self-isolation and quarantine limitations, and within a month, the number of calls linked to domestic violence received on the helpline numbers had increased by 34% (UNODC, 2020).

Contribution Factors

According to Amanda Taub (2020), the lockdown has made it harder for the victims to seek assistance or to escape. It is difficult for the victims to escape, to report the crime, and to get help when they are locked inside the house with the perpetrator. Additionally, they can't contact for assistance or make phone calls because of the invasion of privacy.

Meanwhile, according to Bhalotra et al. (2019), increased stress and frustration are brought on by the economic strain, unemployment, and lockdown procedures. In addition, people no longer have access to traditional methods of reducing stress, such working out in a gym as a

result of the closing of public and private leisure centres and activity locations. This prevents people from releasing stress and can make them feel more stressed and frustrated. This can lead to higher family tensions, which may lead to more domestic violence (Boniol et. al., 2019).

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic's consequences, such as the lockdown, isolation, and unemployment, are causing some perpetrators to react more violently. During the lockdown, there has been an increase in alcohol and drug usage, which may have contributed to the rise in domestic violence (Abdo C., 2020). A woman in Croatia for instance according to Bami X. (2020), sought assistance after her verbally abusive partner escalated his behaviour during the lockdown and began physically abusing her for the first time ever in their relationship. While in China, unable to escape one another, a woman in China claimed that throughout the lockdown, tensions with her husband developed to the point that one day he acted aggressively and beat her (Amanda Taub, 2020).

Conclusion

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an increase in violence against women worldwide. The incidence of domestic violence during pandemic is observed to be encompassing as it is prevalent in developed and developing countries. Household conflict, a lack of access to supportive resources, a decline in stress-relieving activities, and an increase in financial burdens are among various issues during pandemic that contribute to violence against women worse. In this difficult, unprecedented period, efforts should be made on a national and a global level to establish safety measures as lockdown restrictions begin, to respond to violence against women, particularly when the community's overall safety is at stake.

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