

Is COVID-19 Exacerbate Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a public health concern and has adverse effects on the physical and mental health of women (Abramsky et al. 2011). Quarantine is very common during covid19 pandemic. Due to Quarantines and sudden financial challenges, families may feel crowded, frustrated, isolated from extended family and friends and their no longer participation in many enjoyable and relaxing activities have meant that people are at risk of abuse. Persons are left alone with abusive partners for prolonged and continuous periods. Domestic Violence during the current pandemic should not come as a shock or surprise to anyone. Research around the world over a period of time shows that domestic violence increases whether it's a war, natural disasters or other conflict situations. [Fisher 2010, Hines (2007) and Rao (2020)]. The covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a global restructuring of the sources of support for people experiencing domestic violence. Quarantine conditions are also associated with alcohol abuse, depression, and post-traumatic stress symptoms [Brooks S.K. et al 2020].

The World Health Organization cites a strong correlation between alcohol and violence between intimate partners. They note that alcohol affects both body and mind, and can impair thinking and self-control. People who drink alcohol may be less capable of dealing with relationship conflicts without resorting to violence. During COVID-19 many individuals experienced alcohol withdrawal symptoms due to the non-availability of alcohol (Verma et al. 2020). There was a 4-fold increase in the number of patients with alcohol withdrawal symptoms visiting hospitals (Ahmed et al. 2020). Alcohol withdrawal results in the development of some mental and physical reactions (Varma 2020) and violence could be one of them. Some studies found that alcohol consumption can increase the risk

of perpetrating and severity of violence (Gadd et al. 2019; Graham et al. 2011). Not only experiencing alcohol withdrawal symptoms but also consuming alcohol was found to be a cause of domestic violence. Financial stress can factor in, too, especially, if someone in the home has been furloughed. Unemployment is a factor that fuelled the motivation of an offender. An individual became unemployed and stayed at home the entire day, got frustrated, consumed alcohol, and created disturbance (Gatty and Rathee 2020). DV victims shared that her husband lost his factory job recently and beats her in

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Received: 02.02.2021 **Revised:** 08.03.2021

Accepted: 14.05.2021 **Published:** 07.06.2021

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Access this Article online	
Website : www.jpsw.co.in	Quick Response Code 
DOI: http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5105491	

How to cite: Kumar, P. (2021). Is COVID-19 Exacerbate Domestic Violence. *Journal of Psychosocial Wellbeing*, 2(1):1-5.

front of her kids (Lal 2020).

A person murdered his wife, in front of his daughter, suspecting her of infidelity (Shivakumar 2020). Basu (2020) also stated a similar incident where *a woman was allegedly killed by her husband for protesting against his extra-marital affair.*

Evidence suggested that DV related incident prevalent across the world.

China's Hubei province, indicates that DV tripled during February 2020 compared to February 2019 [Fraser E et al 2020]. DV reports in France have increased 30% since they initiated a March 17 lockdown. DV calls in Argentina have increased 25% since their March 20 lockdown. The Portland Police Bureau recorded a 22% increase in arrests related to DV compared to prior weeks from 16 March 20 to 23 March 20 [Portland Police Bureau . 2020]. There is around 42% of the Australian practitioners noted an increase in first-time family violence reporting by women (Fitz-Gibbon et al. 2020). During the month of March 2020, the New York City Police Department emphasized that 10% increase in DV reports compared to March 2019 [New York City Police Department; 2020.]. It has also reported that 30% increase in helpline calls in Cyprus and 33% rise in Singapore [United Nation, Women 2020]. In Texas state in the south-central region of the U S, the San Antonio Police Department stated that they received an 18% increase in calls pertaining to family violence in March 2020 compared to March 2019 [Management CoSAOoE, Department of Government and Public Affairs; 2020]. In Alabama south-eastern U S state, the Sheriff's Office reported a 27% increase in DV calls during March 2020 compared to March 2019 [Money J.2020]. Mahase (2020) reported a 60% increase in emergency calls related to violence against women by their intimate partners in Europe, while Agüero (2020) found a 48% increase in helpline calls related to domestic violence in Peru.

In India, DV violence incidents increased across the

country during the lockdown. Tamil Nadu Police reported an increase in domestic violence complaints, received approximately 25 calls every day during the lockdown period and registered at least 40 such cases (Kannan 2020). One victim of domestic violence told Tamil Nadu police that her husband harassed her daily due to non-availability of alcohol (Kannan 2020). Bangalore Police reported a spike in complaints from 10 calls to 25 calls every day from the victims of DV (Peter 2020). There are some organizations such as Jagori, Shakti Shalini, and AKS Foundation reported a decrease in complaint calls related to DV (Ghoshal 2020). Karnataka's women and child development department reported a 57% decrease in DV calls between 23rd March 2020 and 13th April 2020 (Mulla 2020). The decrease could be attributed to confinement at home, constant monitoring (Piquero et al. 2020) and controlling decision-making by the abuser, social isolation of victims from friends and family members (Kaukinen 2020), and reduced options for support (Usher et al. 2020). An incident from Hyderabad, "a woman and her teenage son from an earlier marriage, were facing the effect of her second husband's frustration over not getting alcohol during the lockdown (Joy 2020). A youth reported that "his father was becoming violent, beating up his mother and even grandmother, because he was having alcohol withdrawals" (Basu 2020). ADV victim shared that "she was depressed as her husband had taken to alcohol abuse out of anxiety over a financial crisis" (Basu 2020).

In the case of domestic violence, mostly men are seen as perpetrators. Though men also experience DV (Malik and Nadda 2019) but in societies where patriarchy prevails, DV is usually associated with women as victims (Dutt 2018). There is sufficient evidence that men also experience DV. Malik and Nadda (2019) reported that one in two married men aged between 21 and 49 years experienced DV from their wives in India.

Challenges to Management of Domestic Violence During COVID-19: Globally, governments

nearsighted the issue of DV in advising people to stay at home. Before the pandemic, survivors were often able to escape violent situations by staying with a family member, going to a shelter, or getting a restraining order, but that these options seem less feasible at the moment. Organizations that work with domestic violence survivors report that measures such as quarantine and physical distancing increase tension within households. sufficient data is collected to understand the impact of COVID-19 on violence against women and girls to make management plans accordingly.

What Should Be Done To Prevent Domestic Violence During Crisis Situations: Individual level- Find a place, where individual can retreat to safely and avoid the bathroom or kitchen. (ii) Enlist support from a trusted friend or family member you can call. (iii) If necessary, use a code word or phrase to indicate for the support. (iv) Memorize phone numbers of people and agencies so that can call in an emergency. (v) Make sure that individual can easily access: cash, identification (Social Security card and driver's license), birth and marriage certificates, credit cards, safe deposit box keys and bank information, health insurance information, any documentation, photos, medical or police reports relating to previous episodes of abuse.

Government should support shelters for all sort of violence – including DV shelters to help them keep providing essential services open during the lockdown and other crisis situations. Measures should be taken where the perpetrator must leave home, instead of the survivor. As China adopted the hashtag #AntiDomesticViolenceDuringEpidemic, same pattern can be followed globally during time of crisis. An ambulance or other vehicle service can be started to take women victims out of homes and into safety. Victims should be offered free calls, helpline and online services to provide support specially during crisis situations. Online chatroom can also be used to provide psychological support (PS) to sufferers and Online PS services, should be linked to other services. Lack of awareness and limited

resources about domestic violence (DV) have been identified as barriers. At a time when many people are more vulnerable to domestic abuse and feel trapped by their circumstances. Even if leaving home and going to a shelter is not what a survivor wants to do, the staff at safe home programs are great to talk with as they can provide support to develop a plan to better keep self and children safe, and connect to lots of valuable resources in the community. Average domestic abuse victims experience 50% incidents of abuse before getting effective help, so it is vitally important that all agencies are working together to reassure domestic abuse victims they can reach out for help and support. It can't put the burden of solving violence against women, on women or vice versa. It is needed to get men or women talking about these issues and sharing the responsibility for solving this problem. Ultimately, it can be possible to prevent domestic abuse from occurring by challenging perpetrator's behavior. It is beneficial to make information of resources and knowledge about domestic violence (DV) available through a variety of different channels accessible. Some possible ways to share this information could be (a) through community and voluntary sector networks and groups, (b) through the local radio station, (c) publicizing at local bus stops and in local newspapers, (d) asking shops and supermarkets to include posters at the front of their stores or include the National Domestic Helpline number on receipts, (e) through posters and leaflets at food banks, (f) publicizing at pharmacies, general practitioners, hospitals, sexual health clinics and sexual assault referral centers, (g) public notice boards – available at parks, outside council buildings etc., (h) do not send any domestic abuse support leaflets directly to households as this could alert the perpetrator, (i) consult local domestic abuse charities and networks for guidance on this, (j) raise awareness through public awareness campaigns, (k) highlight which domestic abuse support services and perpetrator programs are still open and available (l) set up virtual meetings to continue Risk Assessment and Management Conferences.

Conclusion

It can be said that DV during the COVID-19 increased globally. There is little information on care-seeking patterns for sexual assault and DV during the COVID-19 pandemic. Trends in care-seeking and assault patterns are required, on-going monitoring to inform the provision of optimal support for individuals experiencing violence, particularly as countries begin to re-open or lock-down again. [Katherine A M et al 2021]. This cursory analysis illustrates that stay-at-home orders may create a worst-case scenario for individuals suffering from DV and demonstrates a need for further research. With the apparent rise in DV reports, there is a need for more current and standardized modalities of reporting actionable DV data. First responders, physicians, mental health professionals and other healthcare personal need to be made aware of the possible for increased DV during the COVID-19 pandemic so that individual can respond appropriately. Steps could also be taken on an administrative level to make IPV screening tools more readily available in clinical settings and media outlets should be utilized to raise awareness. Social media should also be influenced, while stay-at-home orders are in place to reach a wider audience and provide support. Overall, it is vital that health care providers, policy makers and administration do not lose sight of the increased potential for violence while fighting this global pandemic.[Brad B et al 2020].

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