

Risk Factors of Domestic Violence Reported Before and During the Covid-19 Pandemic: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

The presence of COVID-19 as a global pandemic has triggered the implementation of several policies such as lockdowns to limit public interactions and controlling the spread of the virus. Meanwhile, pandemic also impacts business and jobs resulted in downsizing and reduced income, leading to increased stress on workers. Stay at home in high tension can easily trigger conflict and domestic violence. The study aims to investigate the risk factors for domestic violence reported before the COVID-19 pandemic and during the pandemic. We performed a systematic literature review on the following databases: Scopus, Science Direct, and ProQuest by using the following keywords: Risk AND Factor AND Domestic AND Violence. From 3965 articles found, we selected 33 articles matched to the inclusion criteria and eligible for review. Our analysis revealed that socioeconomic conditions and mental health are still the risk factors of domestic violence before and during the pandemic. However, no studies reported childhood experiences as a risk factor of domestic violence during the pandemic, though studies before the pandemic highlighted childhood experiences as a risk factor for domestic violence. Reports on risk factors of domestic violence during a pandemic are scarce. Future studies are needed to investigate domestic violence factors during the pandemic to develop an effective prevention program.

Keywords: domestic violence, COVID-19 pandemic, risk factor, systematic review.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the enactment of restrictions on community activities or lockdown due to the global pandemic COVID-19, the number of domestic violence cases increased in many countries. More than 4,000 reports related to domestic violence occurred during the pandemic as of April 2020 [1]. Not only in the UK, an increasing number of reporters who experienced domestic violence after the lockdown in Singapore (33 %), Cyprus (30%), France (30%), and Argentina (25%) [2]. Some scientists have interpreted the rising domestic violence cases as "pandemics on pandemics." The COVID-19 event as a new phenomenon in the world has impacted people's lives significantly. The essential thing that has become the global discourse is the shaking of world economic conditions.

Low or no income can be a risk factor for domestic violence. Among Pakistani women, low education and early marriage triggered risk factors leading to domestic violence [3]. In general, domestic violence is dominated by collectivism and gender empowerment makes a more significant contribution to actions that are dominated by men rather than women [4]. This situation affirms the tendency of domestic violence to put women as victims. Domestic violence victims have diverse education levels but the majority of victims have an associate degree or equivalent [5]. Having children is a risk factor for physical violence, excessive alcohol consumption, stress, and childhood experiences. Strict parenting and violence behavior in childhood predict domestic violence [6].

As the number of domestic violence increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, we assumed that the risk factors of domestic violence during pandemic might be different from domestic violence before the pandemic. This study aims to review reported studies on domestic violence in the last five years, particularly comparing the reported studies before and during the pandemic.

2. METHOD

We conducted this systematic review study following the guideline in conducting a systematic review for psychological studies [7] and the PRISMA guidelines [8]. We performed literature searches on September 23-30, 2020 in the following electronic databases: ScienceDirect, ProQuest, and Scopus. We applied the following keywords: Risk AND Factor AND Domestic AND Violence. To obtain relevant articles, we used the following inclusion criteria: 1) Article reporting risk factors for domestic violence before and during COVID-19; 2) original articles (review, case report, book chapter, or else); 3) written in English; 4) full texts are available and accessible; 5) published in years 2015-2020. Figure 1 described the article selection process in detail.

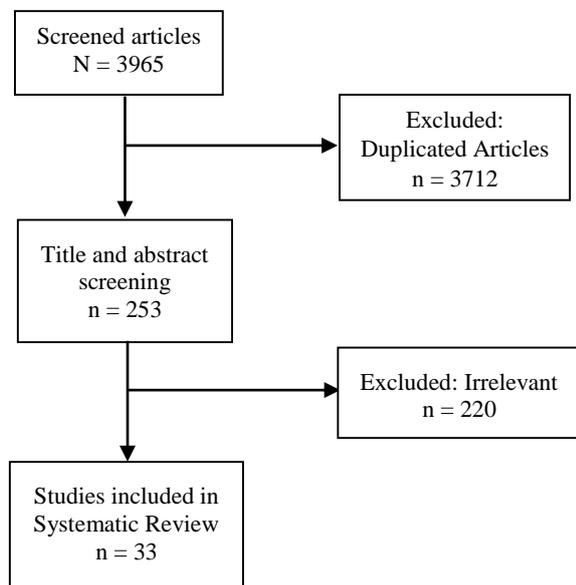


Figure 1. Article selection flowchart

3. RESULT

Based on 33 articles for review, we summarized the findings in view of study types, country where the

study was conducted, the victims, the perpetrators, risk factors, and the study findings. The summary of the reviewed studies is reported in Table 1.

As reported in Table 1, studies on domestic violence were reported from 32 countries mostly from Asia, Africa, Europe, and America, particularly from Thailand, Turkey, and Nigeria. Based on the demographic distribution, studies on domestic violence were frequently carried out in developing countries. We found that women and children were at risk to be domestic violence victims, while men more frequently reported as perpetrators.

3.1. Socio-Economic

In general, studies before the Covid-19 pandemic revealed socio-economic problems as the major cause of women and children at risk for domestic violence [5]. In some countries, social standards that are still closely related to the patriarchal culture have positioned men to always dominate women or groups that tend to be weak [9]. For example, in cases of violence that occur in Nigeria, the culture of polygamy results in a risk of domestic violence perpetrated by husbands against wives and children [10][11]. This is in line with findings from Afghanistan that polygamy has a tendency for wives to be economically dependent on their husbands so that the risk of violence perpetrated by in-laws is greater. Furthermore, this study emphasized the vulnerability of women in marriage including marriage at a young age and polygamy [11]. In Senegal, only marriage is accepted as a type of couple life according to sociology and state religion. There is still forced marriage, a traditional practice for marital life. A forced marriage is a risk factor for domestic violence [12][13].

Studies on domestic violence during the Covid-19 pandemic showed that socio-economic remains the major risk factor of domestic violence. This is in line with previous reports that risk factors in households between March 24 to April 7 2020 were demographic, socio-economic, and family factors that have been found to be associated with childhood abuse and neglect [14]. Again, financial conditions were a risk factor in the household, especially for children [15].

3.2. Mental Health

Previous studies found that mental health is associated with the occurrence of domestic violence.

Table 1. Data extraction from the reviewed articles

Study [Reference]	Risk Factors	Study Findings
Family type, domestic violence and under-five mortality in Nigeria [10]	A polygyny family setting makes women and young children susceptible to domestic violence.	Family type and domestic violence were significant predictors of under-five children mortality in Nigeria
Risk and protective factors associated with domestic abuse among older Chinese in China [21]	Psychological abuse, physical abuse, financial exploitation, and caregiver neglect	The mutually reported rates were 9.7%, 0.8%, 33.2%, and 39.7% for psychological abuse, physical abuse, financial exploitation, and caregiver neglect respectively.
Family background in upbringing experience of violence, and authority relationship among Married Thai Muslims Couples in Pattani Province experiencing domestic violence [6]	Strict upbringing, violent behavior in childhood, witnessing parents quarreling in childhood, and violent behavior in childhood were risk factors for domestic violence	Family background associated with domestic violence.
The specific and combined role of domestic violence and mental health disorders during pregnancy on newborn health [22]	A poor nutritional status at birth highly correlated with poverty and mental health disorder	Domestic violence and mental disorders were highly correlated.
Domestic violence among married women of reproductive age in Zimbabwe [23]	Risk of domestic violence was higher among working women than unemployed women.	Women, either workers or unemployed, were at risk for domestic violence
Domestic violence and perinatal outcomes: A prospective cohort study from Nepal [24]	Domestic violence a potential risk factor for severe morbidity and mortality in newborns.	Exposure to any domestic violence during pregnancy did not associated with risk of a low birthweight baby or birth by cesarean section
Domestic violence and its associated factors among married women of a village development committee of rural Nepal [25]	Mental health	The lifetime domestic violence rate was 38.6%; In the past 1 year, the prevalence was 23.1%. Approx. 12.4% of women experienced all forms of violence concurrently.
Violence against women: prevalence and risk factors in Turkish [26]	One of the most important risk factors for violence against women is the low educational level of women	Age, education, employment status, social insurance, immigration status, place of residence, marital age, year of marriage of women; age, education status, and employment were associated with violence against women.
Domestic violence as a risk factor for postpartum depression among Ethiopian women: Facility based study [16]	Mental health	About 23.3% of the women had the symptom of postpartum depression.
Domestic violence victims in a hospital setting: Prevalence, health impact and patients' preferences [27]	Childhood abuse was a significant risk factor for DV and mental health	Lifetime DV exposure was associated with a significant risk for both physical and mental health-problems.
Domestic violence against women as a risk factor for depressive and anxiety disorders: Findings from domestic violence household survey in Tehran, Iran [17]	Domestic violence against women is a significant social risk factor for not only depression and anxiety as research found in this study but also other types of physical and mental health problems in a wider view	DV as a social factor is significantly correlated factor with depression and anxiety,
Prevalence and risk factors of domestic violence in women attending	Risk factors for being a victim of abuse include being single or divorced,	Risk factors for being a victim of abuse include being single or divorced, having

the National Guard Primary Health Care Centers in the Western Region, Saudi Arabia 2018 [28]	having a postgraduate level of education, employed, and being financially independent of the husband.	a postgraduate level of education, employed, and being financially independent of the husband.
725 Domestic violence and risk factors among rural and urban pregnant women in Niger-Delta, Nigeria [29]	The risk factors were geographic location that is residing in a rural area. alcohol use by victims; alcohol and other substance abuse and controlling behavior by intimate partners.	The prevalence of domestic violence against pregnant women was high among pregnant women in rural and urban areas
Overcrowding as a risk factor for domestic violence and antisocial behaviour among adolescents in Ejigbo, Lagos, Nigeria [30]	Overcrowding showed significant associations with four of five scales measuring aggressive and antisocial behavior.	Level of poverty as correlated to four of five scales measuring aggressive and antisocial behavior.
Shared risk factors for the perpetration of physical dating violence, bullying, and sexual harassment among adolescents exposed to domestic violence [31]	The significant risk factors that were shared across all three forms of aggression were acceptance of sexual violence, mother-adolescent discord, family conflict low maternal monitoring low mother-adolescent closeness, low family cohesion, depressed affect, feelings of anger, and anger reactivity.	Affect, and anger reactivity were risk factors that were shared by the three forms of aggression and that mother-adolescent discord and adolescent acceptance of sexual violence wereas marginally associated with all three forms of aggression.
Determinants of domestic violence against women in Ghana [32]	The risk of ever experiencing domestic violence was 48 % less likely for women whose husbands had higher than secondary education as compared to women whose husbands never had any formal education.	Place of residence, alcohol use by husband and family history of violence do increase a woman' s risk of ever experiencing domestic violence.
Prevalence and risk factors of domestic violence and its impacts on women's mental health in Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan [19]	Poverty, the influence of in-laws, second marriage, stepchildren, forceful intimate relationships, husband's irresponsibility, and addiction, and handicapped children.	A higher level of domestic violence, associated risk factors, and poor mental health of abused women in GB.
Prevalence and incidence of domestic violence during pregnancy and associated risk factors: A study from the South of Sweden [33]	Being single/living apart, having a long- term problem with sleeping and/or having several symptoms of depression during pregnancy	Further, this is important knowledge for health care providers to develop or upgrade guidelines and plans of action for pregnant women exposed to violence
Prevalence of domestic violence against married women in Turkey and associated risk factors [34]	Being discontent in marriage, living in a family in which children are abused, not contributing to decision making at home, living in a large family and living in Kars.	The determined risk factors related to violence were discontent in marriage, children abuse at home, not participating in decision-taking at home, living in the province of Kars and living in a large family
Violence against Afghan women by husbands, mothers-in-law and siblings-in-law/siblings: Risk markers and health consequences [11]	Economic vulnerability and dependency of women as a risk factor for in-law violence, specifically in communities that are highly dependent on remittances from migrant workers	Physical violence was associated with food insecurity and having to borrow for food, being in a polygamous marriage, living with their mother-in-law
Factors affecting domestic violence risk behaviors among Thai Muslim married couples in Satun province [35]	Factors affecting domestic risk behaviors, namely jealous wives, suspicious wives, drinking husbands, drug abusive husbands, being not ready to have one's own family, and lack of time for discussions.	Risk behaviors, namely jealous wives, suspicious wives, drinking husbands, drug abusive husbands, being not ready to have one's own family, and lack of time for discussions.
Domestic violence in Dakar [12]	Young age is a risk factor for spousal	Economic abuse in the past 12 months

	violence. Forced marriage is a risk factor for domestic violence	was 52 reported by 48 respondents, or 33.33 % of the spousal violence victim 53 population.
Factors Predicting domestic violence among Thai Muslim married couples in Pattani province.[5]	Strict upbringing, violent behavior in childhood, and females' inferior status while severe punishment in childhood.	Three predictors were found to have positive relationships with domestic violence: strict upbringing, violent behavior in childhood
Factors related to domestic_violence in pregnant women [36]	Academic qualifications 9 years and unemployed 1000 euros monthly income and good agglomeration index planned pregnancy but not monitored.	Significant result of academic qualifications 9 years and unemployed, 1000 euros monthly income, and good agglomeration, planned, and pregnancy
Data-informed recommendations for services providers working with vulnerable children and families during the COVID-19 pandemic [15]	Not having access to vital services. The NGOs experienced government restrictions, decreased financial support, and the inability to adequately provide services.	The NGOs experienced government restrictions, decreased financial support, and inability to adequately provide services. Increased
Prevalence of domestic violence and its association with family factors: A cross-sectional study among pregnant women in urban communities of Hengyang City, China [37]	Risk factors for DV were tensions with their mother-in-law, tensions with other family members, medium household debt, middle and low family	In summary, women in late pregnancy were at higher risk of DV in the family with tensions, medium household debt and family dysfunction
Domestic violence against women in Turkey [9]	Family integrity is impaired and disagreements are more frequent, affecting the level of domestic violence.	Low social status in Turkey was connected to the level of domestic violence.
The effect of university students' violence tendency on their attitude towards domestic violence and the factors affecting domestic violence attitudes [38]	Various factors including biological, psychological, social, cultural, economic and political ones may affect the formation of violence	Young people's exposure to violence was found high (42.8%). Nevertheless, their scores on violence tendencies and domestic violence attitude were ascertained low.
Prevalence of spousal violence and associated risk factors: Facts from Pakistan Demographics and Health Survey 2012–13 [39]	Education and working status of women and their husband, ethnicity and wealth index affecting the prevalence of spousal violence	Education, profession, ethnicity and wealth index are found significant risk factors associated with spousal violence.
Changes and socioeconomic factors associated with attitudes towards domestic violence among Vietnamese women aged 15-49: [13]	Socioeconomic factors associated with women's condoning of domestic violence were age, wealth, education level, and living area.	Higher educational attainment in women is an important predictor of women's attitudes toward domestic violence.
Domestic violence and its determinants among 15–49-year-old women in a rural block in South India [18]	Socio-economic, well-being, physical and mental health of a woman, her family, and thereby, society as a whole.	Alcohol consumption by husband, controlling behavior by family member, and woman's employment were statistically significant determinants of domestic violence.
Immediate impact of stay-at-home orders to control COVID-19 transmission on socioeconomic conditions, food insecurity, mental health, and intimate partner violence in Bangladeshi women and their families [20]	-	Median monthly family income fell from US\$212 at baseline to \$59 during lockdown; food insecurity, respectively, depression and anxiety symptoms increased during the lockdown.

For example, persons with a postpartum depressive disorder in Ethiopia 23.3% of 144 participants experienced domestic violence [16]. Likewise, domestic violence has a significant presence with depression victims and casualties [17]. Based previous study from Sweden, mental health disorders such as depression, sleep problems, feeling alone were common reported among pregnant women who experienced domestic violence [18]. This led to findings for higher rates of domestic violence, associated risk factors, and poor mental health of women who were abused in GB [19]. This is in line with findings from Southern India that domestic violence has hidden implications for the socio-economic well-being, the physical and mental health of women, their families, and society as a whole [18].

During the COVID-19 pandemic, not only socio-economic, neglect and childhood violence were also risk factors for domestic violence [14]. In Bangladesh, between 19 May and 18 June 2020, lockdowns had an adverse impact on the mental health of mothers and children who were victims of domestic violence [20]. This shows that mental health is a risk factor that needs to be considered in dealing with COVID-19 pandemic.

3.3. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic brought lots of tension and pressures into the families. Questions were raised whether domestic violence will increase during the pandemic or will there be different pattern of risk factors related to domestic violence reported before pandemic and during the pandemic. These questions led us to conduct the study. Our analysis revealed that socioeconomic conditions and mental health are still the risk factors of domestic violence before and during the pandemic. However, no studies reported childhood experiences as a risk factor of domestic violence during the pandemic, though studies before the pandemic highlighted childhood experiences as a risk factor for domestic violence. Reports on risk factors of domestic violence during a pandemic are scarce. Future studies are needed to investigate domestic violence factors during the pandemic to develop an effective prevention program.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

FMS involved in study design, literature search, data analysis, and drafting the manuscript. AE involved in study design, data analysis, drafting and finalizing the manuscript.

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