Determinants of Domestic Violence among Married Women Aged 15-49 Years in Sierra Leone by an Intimate Partner: A Cross-Sectional Study

Authors : Tesfaldet Mekonnen Estifanos, Chen Hui, Afewerki Weldezgi

Abstract : Background: Intimate partner violence (hereafter IPV) is a major global public health challenge that tortures and disables women in the place where they are ought to be most secure within their own families. The fact that the family unit is commonly viewed as a private circle, violent acts towards women remains undermined. There are limited research and knowledge about the influencing factors linked to IPV in Sierra Leone. This study, therefore, estimates the prevalence rate and the predicting factors associated with IPV. Methods: Data were taken from Sierra-Leone Demographic and Health Survey (SDHS, 2013): the first in its form to incorporate information on domestic violence. Multistage cluster sampling research design was used, and information was gathered by a standard questionnaire. A total of 5185 respondents selected were interviewed, out of whom 870 were never been in union, thus excluded. To analyze the two dependent variables: experience of IPV, 'ever' and 'last 12 months prior to the survey', a total of 4315 (currently or formerly married) and 4029 women (currently in union) were included respectively. These dependent variables were constructed from the three forms of violence namely physical, emotional and sexual. Data analysis was applied using SPSS version 23, comprising three-step process. First, descriptive statistics were used to show the frequency distribution of both the outcome and explanatory variables. Second, bivariate analysis adopting chi-square test was applied to assess the individual relationship between the outcome and explanatory variables. Third, multivariate logistic regression analysis was undertaken using hierarchical modeling strategy to identify the influence of the explanatory variables on the outcome variables. Odds ratio (OR) and 95% confidence interval (CI) were utilized to examine the association of the variables considering p-values less than 0.05 statistically significant. Results: The prevalence of lifetime IPV among ever married women was 48.4%, while 39.8% of those currently married experienced IPV in the previous year preceding the survey. Women having 1 to 4 and more than 5 number of ever born babies were almost certain to encounter lifetime IPV. However, women who own a property, and those who referenced 3-5 reasons for which wife-beating is acceptable were less probably to experience lifetime IPV. Attesting parental violence, partner's dominant marital behavior, and women afraid of their partner were the variables related to both experience of IPV 'ever' and 'the previous year prior to the survey'. Respondents who concur that wife-beating is sensible in certain situations and occupations under the professional category had diminished chances of revealing IPV in the year prior to the data collection. Conclusion: This study indicated that factors significantly correlated with IPV in Sierra-Leone are mostly linked with husband related factors specifically, marital controlling behaviors. Addressing IPV in Sierra-Leone requires joint efforts that target men raise awareness to address controlling behavior and empower security in affiliations.

Keywords : husband behavior, married women, partner violence, Sierra Leone

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