

The Effect of Intimate Partner Violence Prevention Program on Knowledge and Attitude of Victims

Authors : Marzieh Nojomi, Azadeh Mottaghi, Arghavan Haj-Sheykholeslami, Narjes Khalili, Arash Tehrani Banihashemi

Abstract : Background and objectives: Domestic violence is a global problem with severe consequences throughout the life of the victims. Iran's Ministry of Health has launched an intimate partner violence (IPV) prevention program, integrated in the primary health care services since 2016. The present study is a part of this national program's evaluation. In this section, we aimed to examine spousal abuse victims' knowledge and attitude towards domestic violence before and after receiving these services. Methods: To assess the knowledge and attitudes of victims, a questionnaire designed by Ahmadzadand colleagues in 2013 was used. This questionnaire includes 15 questions regarding knowledge in the fields of definition, epidemiology, and effects on children, outcomes, and prevention of domestic violence. To assess the attitudes, this questionnaire has 10 questions regarding the attitudes toward the causes, effects, and legal or protective support services of domestic violence. To assess the satisfaction and the effect of the program on prevention or reduction of spousal violence episodes, two more questions were also added. Since domestic violence prevalence differs in different parts of the country, we chose nine areas with the highest, the lowest, and moderate prevalence of IPV for the study. The link to final electronic version of the questionnaire was sent to the randomly selected public rural or urban health centers in the nine chosen areas. Since the study had to be completed in one month, we used newly identified victims as pre-intervention group and people who had at least received one related service from the program (like psychiatric consultation, education about safety measures, supporting organizations and etc.) during the previous year, as our post- intervention group. Results: A hundred and ninety-two newly identified IPV victims and 267 victims who had at least received one related program service during the previous year entered the study. All of the victims were female. Basic characteristics of the two groups, including age, education, occupation, addiction, spouses' age, spouses' addiction, duration of the current marriage, and number of children, were not statistically different. In knowledge questions, post- intervention group had statistically better scores in the fields of domestic violence outcomes and its effects on children; however, in the remaining areas, the scores of both groups were similar. The only significant difference in the attitude across the two groups was in the field of legal or protective support services. From the 267 women who had ever received a service from the program, 91.8% were satisfied with the services, and 74% reported a decrease in the number of violent episodes. Conclusion: National IPV prevention program integrated in the primary health care services in Iran is effective in improving the knowledge of victims about domestic violence outcomes and its effects on children. Improving the attitude and knowledge of domestic violence victims about its causes and preventive measures needs more effective interventions. This program can reduce the number of IPV episodes between the spouses, and satisfaction among the service users is high.

Keywords : intimate partner violence, assessment, health services, efficacy

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