

Experience of Intimate Partner Violence and Mental Health Status of Women of Reproductive Age Group in a Rural Community in Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract : Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is a significant public health problem with adverse health consequences. There is increasing evidence of association of IPV with mental health problems. Understanding the association between IPV and mental health status of women of reproductive aged group in the rural communities in Nigeria can provide information to improve maternal health status. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the relationship between experience of IPV and mental health status of women of reproductive aged group in a rural community in Southwest Nigeria. A community based cross-sectional survey was conducted using a cluster sampling technique to select 283 non-pregnant women of reproductive age group (15-49 years). Mental health was assessed based on respondents' experience of any symptoms of depression, anxiety and/or low self-esteem. IPV was assessed over a period of 12 months and the forms of IPV assessed were emotional, physical and sexual. An interviewer administered questionnaire was used to collect information on experience of IPV, reproductive history and factors influencing mental health. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, Chi-square and multivariate logistic regression at 5% level of significance. The mean age of respondents was 26.1 ± 7.8 with 57.1% aged 15-24 years. More than half (58.0%) were married. Overall, 60.7% of respondents had mental health problems while 84.8% experienced all categories of violence. The pattern of IPV includes physical violence (10.7%), emotional violence (82.7%) and sexual violence (20.8%). Women who experienced sexual violence by a partner are most likely to suffer from all mental issues. Also, gynaecological morbidities are associated with increasing risk of mental health problems. The research demonstrates an urgent need for mental health policies to recognize the relationship between intimate partner violence, gynaecological morbidities and mental health problems in women in Nigeria.

Keywords : intimate partner violence, mental health, reproductive age group, women

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