

Domestic Violence against Women and the Nutritional Status of Their Under-5 Children: A Cross Sectional Survey in Urban Slums of Chittagong, Bangladesh

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Abstract : Violence against women has been treated as a global epidemic which is as fatal as any serious disease or accidents. Like many other low-income countries it is also common in Bangladesh. In spite of existence of a few documented evidences in some other countries, in Bangladesh, domestic violence against women (DVAW) is not considered as a factor for malnutrition in children yet. Hence, the aim of the study was to investigate the association between DVAW and the nutritional status of their under-5 children in the context of slum areas of Chittagong, Bangladesh. A Cross-sectional survey was conducted among 87 women of reproductive age having at least one child under-5 years of age and staying with husband for at least last 1 year in selected slums under Chittagong City Corporation area. Data collection tools were structured questionnaire for the study participants and mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) to measure the nutritional status of the under-5 children. The data underwent descriptive and regression analysis. Out of 87 respondents, 50 (57.5%) reported to suffer from domestic violence by their husband during last one year. Physical violence was found to be significantly associated with age ($p=0.02$), age at marriage ($p=0.043$), wealth score ($p=0.000$), and with knowledge regarding law ($p=0.017$). According to the measurement of mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) 21% children were suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and the same percentage of children were suffering from moderate acute malnutrition (MAM). However, unadjusted odds ratio suggested that there was negative association with domestic violence and nutritional status. But, the logistic regression confounding for other variable showed significant association with total family income ($p=0.006$), wealth score ($p=0.031$), age at marriage ($p=0.029$) and number of child ($p=0.006$). Domestic violence against women and under nutrition of the children, both are highly prevalent in Bangladesh. More extensive research should be performed to identify the factors contributing to the high prevalence of domestic violence and malnutrition in urban slums of Bangladesh. Household-based intervention is needed to limit this burning problem. In a nutshell, effective community participation, education and counseling are essential to create awareness among the community.

Keywords : Bangladesh, cross sectional survey, domestic violence against women, nutritional status, under-5 children, urban slums

Conference Title : ICMNCH 2018 : International Conference on Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health

Conference Location : Venice, Italy

Conference Dates : June 21-22, 2018