

STUDY OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND HEALTH SERVICES UTILIZATION IN MARRIED WOMEN IN TEHRAN, 2011-12

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Background review: Domestic violence against women (DV) is one of the health problems that have 9-15% of the burden of diseases in middle-aged women and would lead to other health problems such as psychiatric disorders and could increase health services utilization and costs.

Aim: To estimate the prevalence of DV in married women in Tehran and its relation to health services utilization.

Methods: A household survey of 615 married women in 22 city districts of Tehran in 2011 with a cluster sampling method was done. Demographic, knowledge, attitude and experience of DV in the last 12 months and during marital life, health services utilization in the last 1 and 12 months were collected. Analyses were done by STATA, SPSS and ArcGIS softwares.

Results: We interviewed 615 married women, mean±SE age 42.6±1.1 years and duration of marriage 21.5±0.7 years. Physical and non-physical DV during marital life were 35.1% and 7.2%; respectively and during the last 12 months were 18.9% and 35.6%; respectively. Health service utilization during the last 1 and 12 months were 2.6 and 7.15 times per person; respectively. Women with non-physical DV utilized more mental health and non-prescribed medicine use ($P < 0.05$). Women with physical DV had less physician (GP, Specialist) services use (1.8 ± 0.6 vs. 2.3 ± 0.1 , respectively, $P = 0.045$) but similar rate of all services utilization with women without physical DV.

Conclusions: DV victims had higher rates of anxiety and depression that would lead to higher health services utilization among them and may produce at least 250 billion Rials annual cost to the health system.