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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### CONJUGAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE URBAN COMMUNITY OF IMERINTSIATOSIKA: PREVALENCE AND DETERMINING FACTORS

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## INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence includes spousal violence against one another, violence against women is a major problem of public health and a violation of woman's rights (Nations Unies, 2016). More than 35% of women report having been exposed to physical or sexual violence by their intimate partner according to WHO (Organisation Mondiale De La Sante, 2013). But the figures vary from country to country, in high-income countries, the prevalence of spousal violence is estimated at 23.2%, while in Ethiopia, it reaches 71% of women (Organisation Mondiale De La Sante, 2013; Organisation mondiale de la sante, 2015). Thus, the hypothesis of the present study consists in verifying that the socio-economic and cultural profile, the toxic habits of

women and their spouses, the antecedents of the spouse, women's knowledge of violence determine the conjugal violence in the community of Imerintsiasika. The aims of this study are to assess the prevalence of domestic violence and to determine the factors that influence the onset of this form of violence. The knowledge of these factors will make possible to establish programs aimed at putting in place appropriate preventive strategies in the fight against domestic violence.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive, retrospective and cross-sectional study was conducted in March 2016 until August 2016 in the urban district of Imerintsiasika.

The urban community of Imerintsiasosika is located in the central part of the Itasy region (Madagascar being composed of 22 regions). It is 30 km from the capital on the national road number 1. The total population is 53,698 in 2016, and the female gender is 53.5%. Nearly three quarters of the population (74.4%) are farmers and ranchers. The study includes all married women, whatever the type of union, living with their spouse for at least one year of common life during the study period. A home visit was carried out in order to allow individual interview at their home. And the interview was conducted by the healthcare team. Nevertheless, the existence of deafness, or muteness or psychological problems as delirious state found in married women is an exclusion criteria for the study. The sample size was determined by using the two-stage cluster sampling and was calculated from the formula:

$$n = \frac{\epsilon \alpha^2 * p * q * g}{i^2}$$

$n$  : sample size

$\epsilon \alpha = 2$  : reduced gap

$p = 0,5$

$q = 1 - p = 0,5$

$g = 2,1$  : corrective coefficient of the cluster effect

$i = 0,10$  : desired accuracy

Thus, the sample size was 210 women, a sample divided into 30 clusters, so 7 women per cluster. An individual interview of the selected married women was conducted to obtain the expected information. The data were collected by means of a questionnaire previously tested and validated. The software Epi info version 3.5.3 and Excel 2013 were used for data analysis. The Pearson  $\chi^2$  test was used to compare the proportions obtained with a significance level  $p = 0.05$ . The Fisher test was used when the conditions of use of  $\chi^2$  are not fulfilled. The confidence level is set at 95%.

## RESULTS

**Study population:** A total of 210 women were included in the study. The age of women ranged from 20 to 49 years, and the average age was  $32.8 \pm 8$  years. All women are found younger than their spouse and average age difference with spouse is estimated at  $5 \pm 4$  years.

**Women victims of domestic violence:** Domestic violence was found in 159 women (75.7%) and 66 of them (41.5%) were victims of psychological violence. Physical violence was found in 47 women (29.6%). Women victims of economic violence and sexual violence were respectively 34 (21.4%) and 12 (7.5%). The proportion of women who are victims of spousal violence increases with the age group and decreases when the level of education increases but the results are not significant. On the other hand, there is a statistically significant link between the length of the couple's union ( $p = 0.03$ ), the number of dependent children ( $p = 0.01$ ) and spousal violence. The household of five or more persons is significantly related to violence against women ( $p = 0.001$ ). Women who are not a member in an association and those with a lack of amusement have a statistically significant relationship to the occurrence of spousal violence (Table I).

**Spouses:** A statistically significant correlation was found between spousal education, age difference with their wives,

and spousal violence. There are many cases of marital violence in spouse with a low level of education ( $p = 0.004$ ) and an age difference with their wives under 6 year ( $p = 0.02$ ). In addition, there are a high proportion of spouses who do not belong to an association (78.8%). The proportions of spouses who are not engaged in entertainment (83.0%) are more violent than those who practice it (65.1%). Not belonging to an association and non-practicing spouse's entertainment are statistically significant related to the occurrence of conjugal violence ( $p = 0.01$  and  $p = 0.002$ ) (Table II). The violent nature of the spouse does not depend on his age, nor his occupation, nor his monthly income, Table II shows the absence of a statistically significant relationship between these different parameters and domestic violence. According to Table III, a large proportion of women (95.5%) who are victims of spousal violence drink alcoholic beverages and there is a statistically significant relationship between the occurrence of spousal violence and the consumption of such substance ( $p = 0.0001$ ). Aggressive behaviors also expose women to violence, a statistically relationship is proven ( $p = 0.000$ ). The vast majority of spouses lived with abusive parents (93.2%) who consumed alcoholic beverages (86.2%) and their childhood was disrupted (87.3%). A statistically significant correlation was found between parental alcoholism, family violence, spouse's childhood, and spousal violence (Table III).

### Knowledge of women who are victims of domestic violence:

Table IV shows that almost all women (92.9%) have poor knowledge of the different forms of violence and are victims of spousal violence ( $p = 0.000$ ). More than 80% of women are unaware of their rights or the law against domestic violence and there is a statistically significant link between the occurrence of spousal violence and poor knowledge of women's rights ( $p = 0.005$ ) and laws against violence ( $p = 0.000$ ).

## DISCUSSION

This study shows that three quarters of married women have been victims of domestic violence. The result is similar to a survey found in Turkey in 2014, where nearly 79.1% of married women experienced domestic violence (4). As for the forms of violence, the results are similar to those study conducted in Tunisia which showed that the most common form is represented by psychological violence for 56.9% (5). These results show that spousal violence does not depend on the country in which one lives, either in a developed country or in a developing country like Madagascar, it is everywhere and several married women suffer from it. Table 1 showed that neither the woman's age nor her educational level nor her occupations have a statistically significant link to the existence of marital violence. On the other hand, a low level of education among spouses is a factor related to spousal violence ( $p = 0.004$ ). A study carried out by FESEHA G and al in North Ethiopia found that nearly half of married women who are illiterate are victims of domestic violence (6). Education gives social and cultural power access to information, social services, health services that are beneficial to reducing conflict in the household (5). The length of the union (more than 10 years), the number of dependent children (4 or more children), and the household size (5 and over) are all factors determining the occurrence of spousal violence (Table 1). Moreover, several studies confirm that a number of children greater than or equal to 3 was significantly associated with domestic violence against women (5) (8).

Table 1. Characteristics of women by socio-economic and cultural profile

Characteristics	Presence of violence		Absence of violence		Total		p-value
	n	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	
<b>Age range</b>							
20 à 29	60	70,6	25	29,4	85	100	
30 à 39	62	77,5	18	22,5	80	100	NS
40 à 49	37	82,2	08	17,8	45	100	
<b>Instruction level</b>							
Low	98	78,4	27	21,6	125	100	NS
High	61	71,8	24	28,2	85	100	
<b>Union's duration</b>							
< 10 years	60	68,2	28	31,8	88	100	
≥ 10 years	99	81,2	23	18,8	122	100	0,03
<b>Number of dependent children</b>							
< 4	98	70,5	41	29,5	139	100	0,01
≥ 4	61	85,9	10	14,1	71	100	
<b>Household size</b>							
< 5	60	65,2	32	34,8	92	100	
≥ 5	99	83,9	19	16,1	118	100	0,001
<b>Profession</b>							
Housewife	19	65,5	10	34,5	29	100	
Primary sector	92	78,0	26	22,0	118	100	NS
Secondary sector	11	73,3	04	26,7	15	100	
Tertiary sector	37	77,1	11	22,9	48	100	
<b>Monthly income in Ariary</b>							
Less than 190.000	153	75,0	51	25,0	204	100	NS
190.000 and other	06	100	00	00,0	06	100	
<b>Membership of an association</b>							
YES	29	59,2	20	40,8	49	100	
NO	130	80,7	31	19,3	161	100	0,002
<b>Practice of entertainment</b>							
YES	31	63,3	18	36,7	49	100	0,02
NO	128	79,5	33	20,5	161	100	

Table 2. Characteristics of Spouses by Socio-Economic and Cultural Profile

Characteristics	Presence of violence		Absence of violence		TOTAL		p-value
	n	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	
<b>Age range</b>							
20 à 29	29	67,4	14	32,6	43	100	NS
30 à 39	67	80,7	16	19,3	83	100	
40 à 49	45	77,6	13	22,4	58	100	
50 and over	18	69,2	08	30,8	26	100	
<b>Instruction level</b>							
Low	110	82,1	24	17,9	134	100	0,004
High	49	64,5	27	35,5	76	100	
<b>Age difference with his wife (year)</b>							
< 6	111	80,4	27	19,6	138	100	0,02
≥ 6	48	66,7	24	33,3	72	100	
<b>Profession</b>							
Primary sector	82	79,6	21	20,4	103	100	NS
Secondary sector	12	63,2	07	36,8	19	100	
Tertiary Sector	65	73,9	23	26,1	88	100	
<b>Monthly income in Ariary</b>							
Less than 190 000	125	75,8	40	24,2	165	100	NS
190 000 and over	34	75,6	11	24,4	45	100	
<b>Membership of an association</b>							
YES	21	60,0	14	40,0	35	100	
NO	138	78,8	37	21,2	175	100	0,01
<b>Practice of entertainment</b>							
YES	56	65,1	30	34,9	86	100	
NO	103	83,0	21	17,0	124	100	0,002

It can be said that promiscuity promotes the manifestation of domestic violence. Non-membership in an association and lack of entertainment for both women and partners significantly expose the woman to spousal violence ( $p = 0.002$ ). Membership in an association and the practice of entertainment are a protective factor to violence, they also contribute to the development of everyone to establish appropriate behavior towards society. The present study also shows that there is a statistically significant relationship between the consumption of alcoholic beverages among women ( $p = 0.0001$ ) and their spouse ( $p = 0.000$ ), their aggressive behaviors ( $p = 0.000$ ) and domestic violence.

Various studies in South Korea, West Ethiopia and Tunisia have found a link between spousal alcoholism and spousal violence against women (9) (10) (5). In addition, in the vast majority of conjugal violence, spouses also lived with violent parents (93.2%) and alcoholics (86.2%) and their childhood was disrupted (87.3%). Thus, by identification, the little boy witnessing the violence in his family or even the victim of abuse will see violence as a normal means of communication considered later as "normal" and that he may reproduce it as an adult. Moreover, it has been found in this study that aggressive behavior as a child is perpetuated as an adult.

**Table 3. Toxic Habits of Women and Their Spouses, Spousal Behaviors and Family History**

Characteristics	Presence of violence		Absence of violence		TOTAL		p-value
	n	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)	
<b>Alcoholic beverage</b>							
At the woman							
YES	46	95,5	01	04,5	47	100	0,0001
NO	113	70,5	50	29,5	163	100	
<b>At the spouse</b>							
YES	130	90,3	14	09,7	144	100	0,000
NO	29	43,9	37	56,1	66	100	
<b>Behaviour</b>							
Aggressive	100	100	00	00,0	100	100	0,000
Quiet	30	68,2	14	31,8	44	100	
<b>Family history of the spouse</b>							
Alcoholic parents							
YES	62	86,2	10	13,8	72	100	0,01
NO	97	70,3	41	29,7	138	100	
<b>Existence of violence</b>							
YES	55	93,2	04	06,8	59	100	0,0002
NO	104	68,8	47	31,2	151	100	
<b>Spouse childhood</b>							
Disturbed	62	87,3	09	12,7	71	100	0,005
Non disturbed	97	69,8	42	30,2	139	100	

**Table 4. Women's knowledge of domestic violence**

Knowledge	Presence of violence		Absence of violence		TOTAL		p-value
	n	(%)	n	(%)	N	(%)	
<b>Forms of violence</b>							
Good	13	24,5	40	75,5	53	100	0,000
Bad	146	92,9	11	7,1	157	100	
<b>Places of appeal</b>							
Good	13	81,2	03	18,8	16	100	NS
Bad	146	75,2	48	24,8	194	100	
<b>Woman rights</b>							
Good	34	61,8	21	38,2	55	100	0,005
Bad	125	80,6	30	19,4	155	100	
<b>Law against violence</b>							
Good	18	47,3	20	52,7	38	100	0,000
Bad	141	81,9	31	18,1	172	100	

NS Not significant

The literature mentions that spousal violence against women is significantly related to family history of violence (Semahegn, 2015). With regard to women's knowledge of domestic violence, there is a statistically significant link between women's poor knowledge of different forms of violence ( $p = 0.000$ ), women's rights ( $p = 0.005$ ), laws against violence ( $p = 0.000$ ) and domestic violence. Results similar to those found in China and Tanzania (Zhao, 2006; Abeid, 2012). The ignorance of women undoubtedly contributes to the unconsciousness of the situation and thus to the perpetuation of violence. The present study is transversal but not longitudinal survey; it does not allow to take care of women victims of domestic violence, nor to monitor their evolution. Nevertheless, it will help decision-makers adjust programs to combat violence, with emphasis on primary prevention. Information, education and communication about violence are one of the keys to prevention.

## Conclusion

This study shows clearly that domestic violence is multifactorial and provides a useful basis for health and education programs to help combat this type of violence. To achieve the sustainable development goals of the United Nations by 2030, the protection of women will therefore have to be prioritized.

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