The Impact of Intimate Partner Violence on Asian Women

Shuning Hu

Boston University

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**Introduction**

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is one of the most prevalent forms of violence against women committed by an intimate partner (e.g., husbands, boyfriends, parents) and includes physical, sexual and emotional violence. It occurs all around the world, amongst people belonging to various social, cultural and religious backgrounds and is recognized as an overwhelming public health issue worldwide. Garcia-Moreno and his colleagues conducted by the world health organization on 24000 women belonging to10 various countries from various cultural and geographical settings revealed that intimate partner violence was prevalent in all countries. Results suggested that 13-61% of the women who had ever been in an intimate relationship reported being physically abused by their partners, 4-49% reported being severely physically abused by their intimate partner, 6-59% reported being sexually abused by their partner and 20-75% reported being emotionally abused at least once in their life time (Garcia-Moreno et al, 2005).

Social workers have a considerable responsibility in all aspects of IPV, including policies, legislation, policies, practice, and support. Social workers also provide important services to survivors of IPV and to their children. Social workers provide their services alongside with physicians, psychologists, and other mental health professionals in order to help the victims of intimate partner violence to not only fight for their ethical rights but also support them overcome the emotional and physical harm caused by intimate partner violence. Moreover, they attempt to empower the women who are in violent relationships to break the cycle of violence.

**Literature Review**

There have been many studies conducted around the world to explore the frequency of different kinds of violence, like how often one woman will experience IPV. Other researchers have focused on the impact of intimate partner violence on the mental and physical health of women, like the relationship between depression and IPV. When a woman is a victim of abuse, it has a direct impact on the way she perceives herself, situations and from other people (e.g., friends, family). Intimate partner violence has been a topic of study in many Asian countries. For instance, Rai and Rai (2019) conducted a study on the impact of sexual violence on Indian women who were victims of IPV. Qualitative method was used and in-depth interviews were conducted with victims of sexual abuse. Results indicated that the victims of sexual abuse suffered from anxiety, sleeping disorder, obsessions and acute stress disorders. The results also found that the relationship between sexual violence and mental disorders varied; sometimes sexual violence predicted or maintained the disorder, whereas at other times it predisposed the disorder (Rai & Rai, 2019). Stephenson, Winter & Hindin (2013) also conducted a study in India that focused on examining the relationship between frequency on different types of abuses and the mental health of 6,303 married women living in four different rural areas of India. Results pointed out that experiencing physical, verbal or sexual violence was associated with a greater risk of mental health issues amongst women who have been abused by their husbands. (Stephenson, Winter & Hindin, 2013). These studies point out towards the significance of screening women who are undergoing violence from their husbands in both rural as well as urban areas of India (Stephenson, Winter & Hindin, 2013). Therefore, there is a demand of support for women who are undergoing mental health issues due to violence from their husbands.

Ali, Ali, Khuwaja and Nanji (2014) aimed exploring the fraction of women being targeted to intimate partner violence and the attitudes of women who were subjected to violence by their husbands. This study took in Karachi, Pakistan on 401 women between the ages of 16 to 60 years participated in it. Results indicated that 35% of the women reported being physically abused in the past one year. Moreover, the experience of violence was associated with women’s educational level, husband’s educational level, smoking and substance use of the husband. The results showed that women who suffered from IPV would have low chances to finish their education and would not pursue the further education. Moreover, those women’s husbands showed a low education level, and they always drink alcohol and use substances. The study concluded that education plays an important role in changing the perspective of the attitude of women against intimate partner violence, as women’s education could make them stronger and more independent. (Ali, Ali, Khuwaja & Nanji, 2014).

Intimate partner violence is prevalent worldwide and one of its most common impacts on mental health is depression. Esie, Oyspuk, Schuler and Bates (2019) conducted a study in Bangladesh to find out the prevalence of depression amongst pregnant women going through IPV. The sample included 3290 women belonging to 77 villages in Bangladesh. Results indicated that 77.2% of the women had faced psychological abuse, 58.8% who had faced sexual abuse and 44.4% had faced physical abuse. One third of the women had suffered from an injury due to IPV. Depression was measured by the risk of major depressive episode (MDE) scale and by means of the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS), and it later demonstrated a strong correlation existed between severity of IPV and MDE. (Esie, Osypuk, Schuler & Bates, 2019).

The prevalence of IPV seems to be high amongst women in many Asian countries such as India, Pakistan and Bangladesh which are located in South East Asia. Similar results were found in Armenia, which is situated in South West Asia. Kabir and Khan (2019) focused on exploring the impact of IPV on the empowerment of women in Armenia. The empowerment of women means that people should respect, honor, recognize women in the society. Therefore, for women who did not have empowerment means that those women did not receive the respect, honor and recognition that they should receive. The study recruited 6116 women, from both Rural as well as urban areas of the country. The results indicated that women between the ages 35 to 49 years were significantly most likely to have suffered from violence as compared to other age groups. 89% of the women who did not have decision making power and 11% of those who had decision making powers were likely to go through IPV. Age, number of children, socio economic status and empowerment status were significantly related to IPV. The research concluded that women who did not have empowerment were more likely to face violence from their partners as compared to those who were empowered. (Kabir & Khan, 2019)

There have been researches trying to explore the impact of Intimate partner violence amongst immigrant Asians living in America. Sabri and her colleagues the risk and protective factors of IPV among 1st and 2nd generation immigrants born in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the United states. In depth interviews were conducted and themes were generated. The study found IPV cultural factors such as normalization of abuse, need for protection of family honor, fear of losing children, living a lonely life and arranged marriages. Protective factors included having a supportive family, religious factors, employing safety strategies, education and empowerment. The study concluded that there was a need for intervention services that were culturally sensitive for the South Asian communities (Sabri et al., 2018).

The findings of the above studies therefore point out that not only a large percentage of women living in Asia are suffering from Intimate Partner violence but on the other hand Asian women living in United States are also suffering from IPV. Although literature has focused on cultural factors that impact IPV, there is little literature on exploring the mental health of the immigrant women residing in the United States. As Previous studies reflect that there are high rates of depression and suicidal ideation in women who experienced IPV, the present study will not only aim at finding the level of depression and suicidal ideation though standardized scales, but will also find the association of education with the presence of IPV amongst Asian women living in United States.

**Research Question and Hypothesis**

The present study will focus on studying depression and suicidal ideation amongst Asian women living in the United States who went through IPV. A secondary aim of the study will be to explore the relationship between educational levels and IPV amongst these women. The aimed subjects will be the women who experienced IPV in the past but no current IPV experiences, or the women who experienced IPV in the past but have already been recovered now. The independent variable will therefore be the IPV which will be determined from semi-structured interview. The dependant variable will be the level of depression and suicidal ideation which will be indicated through the scores of scales used. Beck inventory for depression will be used to determine ht levels of depression and the Suicidal Ideation Questionnaire (SIQ) will be used to access the suicidal ideation of women who went through IPV. For the second part of the study, the educational level will be the independent variable and the violence will be the dependant variable. The following hypotheses are formulated for the purpose of the study:

1. Asian immigrant women who experienced IPV in the past will have higher levels of depression.
2. Suicidal ideation will differ according to the kind of violence women are facing.
3. Higher levels of education are predicted to be associated with lower level of IPV among Asian Immigrant Women.

Therefore, for the first research question, the null hypothesis will be that there is no relationship between IPV with depression. For the second research question, the null hypothesis will be that there is no relationship between suicidal ideation and IPV. The third null hypothesis will be that IPV also will associate with higher level of IPV among Asian Immigrant Women.

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Appendix A

The search engine used was Google and the search words used along with the results generated are as follows:

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| **Database** | **Search Terms** | **Results Yielded** |
| Google Scholar | Intimate Partner Violence, Asia | ## 27,600,000 results |
| Google Scholar | Frequency, Intimate Partner Violence, Women’s mental health | ## 65,300,000 results |
| Google Scholar | Impact on mental health, intimate partner violence, Asia | ## 47,800,000 results |