

Partner Violence in Moshi, Northern Tanzania: Prevalence and Risk Factors

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A recent cross-sectional study of South African women (Jewkes, Levin, & Penn-Kekana, 2002) revealed that a number of key risk factors predicted women's self-reports of intimate partner violence victimization, especially his and her drinking, low educational rates of women, and women's liberal ideas about gender roles and women's rights. These results corroborate the theory that as women accumulate more human capital and develop non-traditional values about gender equity, men are more likely to respond with violence. It is unclear, however, whether the men who are violent are more likely to be unemployed vis a vis their partners, or whether violence is a shroud for their own failed obligations.

Violence against women poses a worldwide threat to women's health and well-being (Fishbach & Herbert, 1997; Heise, 2002). Despite widespread reports of domestic and sexual violence, there are few studies that examine the roots of violence against women across different cultures. Much of the research that informs theory about the origins of domestic violence derives from studies in the West, especially North America. It is also the case that few studies have used similar research methods and forms of measurement across different countries in order to begin to establish comparative approaches. This paper will present the results of a cross-sectional study conducted in Moshi Urban District in the Kilimanjaro Region of northern Tanzania.

Theoretical Perspectives

Although intimate partner violence occurs at varying rates worldwide, there may be quite different origins. For instance, conventions surrounding gender roles, marriage and kinship might all contribute to variation in domestic violence rates cross-culturally. One theoretical

model that has yet to be tested in an African context is structural exchange theory (Goode, 1971). Within this framework, marriage partners are seen to contribute specific “goods” to the marriage designated by gender role. In the sexual contract, women’s obligation includes acquiescing to sex, the most glaring of several inequities built into traditional marriage contracts worldwide (c.f., Pateman, 1988). Exchange theory would predict that women would be vulnerable if the asymmetry especially favored the woman over the man, who might feel entitled and threatened by the woman’s ascendancy.

On the other hand, another feminist framework might predict that women’s own value increases with the development of her human capital, ultimately deterring partner violence. In this case women with more education and potential for income generation would invite more serious investment on the part of men. This investment would take the form of marriage, dedicating resources to the family unit, and eschewing some of the privileges exclusive to men such as multiple sexual partners or wives and drinking to excess. Of course, the accumulation of women’s human capital might also invite violence since with resources “she can walk” more freely than those less educated or employable (England & Farkas, 1986). These two competing views will be tested in the present analyses.

Data and Research Methods

Study Design

Moshi Urban District contains 16 wards and each household was assigned a number during the listing prior to survey interviews. One hundred and fifty clusters were selected with probability proportional to household numbers, and 17 households were selected randomly within each cluster. In all selected households, women aged 20 – 44 years who are de facto residents of the household were invited to participate in the community survey.

Measures

Women who agreed to participate in the survey were asked several socio-demographic questions including: age, educational attainment, religion, tribe, and employment. Women were also asked multiple questions about marital history and partner status, pregnancy history and number of children, their own alcohol use, partner's employment, partner's alcohol use, and sexual practices.

The questionnaire measured three types of violence: verbal, physical, and sexual. Verbal abuse was captured with one question: "In the last 12 months, how often has your husband or partner insulted or sworn at you?" Physical violence was measured using two questions, which were asked in relation to two different time periods: "In the last 12 months, how often has your husband or partner: 1. Threatened to hurt you physically; and 2. Hit, slapped, kicked, or otherwise physically hurt you?" and "At any time in your life, has any husband or partner: 1. Threatened to hurt you physically; and 2. Hit, slapped, kicked, or otherwise physically hurt you?" The responses for all questions asked of the last 12 months were: never, sometimes, always or often. Any positive indication (sometimes, always or often) was recoded to a "Yes" to allow comparison with the questions asked about any time in her life, which was asked as a Yes/No question.

Sexual violence was asked in three different ways. First, women were asked to describe the first time they had sexual intercourse, specifically "How would you describe the first time that you had sex? Would you say that you wanted to have sex, you did not want to have sex but it happened anyway, or were you forced to have sex?" Women who indicated that they were forced to have sex are included. Second, women were asked two questions about sexual violence in the current relationship and in previous relationships: "Within your present

relationship have you ever had sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because your husband or partner threatened or used some degree of physical force to make you?" and "Outside of your present relationship have you ever had sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because your husband or partner threatened or used some degree of physical force to make you?"

Preliminary Findings

This paper will focus on both the rates of intimate partner violence and risk factors that identify women who are victims of intimate partner violence. These analyses were restricted to the 1446 women for whom complete data on violence histories were collected, to avoid misclassification errors.

Rates of Victimization

The rates of intimate partner violence in this sample of women in Moshi, Tanzania have been calculated and are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Rates of violence in the last 12 months and at any time

Type of Violence	Item	In the last 12 months (N=1446)	At any time, including the last 12 months (N=1446)
Verbal			
	Insulted or sworn at you	16.2% (n=234)	--
Physical			
	Threatened to hurt you physically	14.5% (n=209)	16.8% (n=243)
	Hit, slapped, kicked, or otherwise physically hurt you	16.2% (n=234)	19.3% (n=279)
	Cumulative Physical Violence (either of above items)	19.9% (n=288)	23.0% (n=332)
Sexual			
	Forced to have intercourse	1.2% (n=17)	10.6% (n=153)

Overall, one in five women in northern Tanzania reported recent partner violence, and nearly one in four experienced partner violence at some point during their lifetimes. When sexual assault is combined with partner violence for lifetime experiences with gender-based violence, we find that nearly one in three women have been physically or sexually assaulted. These rates are roughly equivalent to rates reported in North America and Europe, and substantially lower than, for instance, South Africa, for which there is comparable data.

This research shows that different responses are obtained about sexual assault based on how questions are asked. When asked about forced intercourse in relationships, 3.8% of women (n=55) responded that this event had taken place at one time. However, 9.3% of women (n=134) reported that their first sexual intercourse was forced, and another 14.2% (n=205) reported that they did not want to have sex at the time of their first intercourse, but it happened anyway. These findings indicate that caution must be exercised when interpreting comparative rates across nations and cultures.

Expected Findings

In addition to the data presented above, demographic characteristics will be analyzed to understand how they might shape the risk for intimate partner violence among women in this sample. Specifically, variables were selected that bear on the following hypotheses: (1) Women's human capital in the forms of education and employment and her ability to have children will deter partner abuse; (2) Men's paternal investment in the family unit in terms of marriage, fathering children, providing economically through employment and other resources will deter abusive behavior; (3) Men who have low investment and also exercise the full privileges of entitlement conferred to them as men, including having open sexual relationships outside their present one, and drinking to excess, will be more violent.

Based on the theoretical framework presented above, some of the following variables will be tested: age, tribe, religion, educational attainment, duration of stay in Moshi Urban District, women's employment, partner's employments, monogamous or polygamous union, partner's contributions to the family, and partner's employment outside of Moshi. Regression analyses are expected to confirm the above hypotheses. The implications to prevent violence, should our data support these hypotheses, would be to enhance women's opportunities for the development of human capital and to develop incentives to enlist men's investment in a primary union.

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