

## The Relationship Between Depression and Domestic Violence Towards Women

### Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddet ve Depresyon Arasındaki İlişki

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#### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study was conducted to determine the relationship between depression and domestic violence toward women.

**Materials and Methods:** This cross-sectional study was carried out with 464 married women. A Descriptive Information Form, the Domestic Violence Scale and Beck Depression Inventory were used as the data collection instruments. In the statistical analysis, frequencies, percentages, means, ANOVA, t-test, correlation analysis and regression analysis were utilized.

**Results:** It was determined that the mean score for domestic violence of women was  $42,58 \pm 15,96$  and the mean score for depression was  $10,32 \pm 8,92$ . There was a positive and significant relationship between domestic violence and depression ( $p=0,000$ ). Factors such as the age of the woman and her spouse, status of being subjected to violence, employment status, educational level and form of marriage were determined as factors that were effective on domestic violence and depression.

**Conclusions:** It was determined that the level of domestic violence and depression levels of women were mild. In line with this result, it is necessary to create social policies regarding the problem of violence, develop awareness among healthcare professionals, and healthcare professionals need to take responsibility regarding violence in their professional lives.

**Keywords:** Depression, domestic violence, woman

#### ÖZ

**Amaç:** Bu araştırma kadına yönelik aile içi şiddet ve depresyon arasındaki ilişkiyi saptamak amacıyla yapıldı.

**Materyal ve Metot:** Kesitsel tipte yapılan araştırma 464 evli kadın ile yürütüldü. Veri toplama aracı olarak kadınları tanıttıcı anket formu, aile içi şiddet ölçeği ve depresyon ölçeği kullanıldı. İstatistiksel analizde sayı, yüzde, ortalama, ANOVA, t testi, korelasyon ve regresyon analizleri kullanıldı.

**Bulgular:** Kadınların aile içi şiddet puan ortalamasının  $42,58 \pm 15,96$  depresyon puan ortalamasının ise  $10,32 \pm 8,92$  olduğu belirlendi. Aile içi şiddet ile depresyon arasında pozitif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu saptandı ( $p=0,000$ ). Kadının ve eşinin yaşı, şiddete maruz kalma durumu, çalışma durumu, eğitim düzeyi, evlenme şekli gibi faktörlerin aile içi şiddet ve depresyon üzerinde etkili değişkenler olduğu belirlendi.

**Sonuç:** Kadınların aile içi şiddet düzeyi ile depresyon seviyelerinin hafif düzeyde olduğu saptandı. Bu sonuç doğrultusunda şiddet sorununa yönelik sosyal politikaların oluşturulması, sağlık profesyonellerinde farkındalık geliştirilmesi ve sağlık profesyonellerinin mesleki yaşamlarında şiddete yönelik sorumluluk alması gerektiği öngörülmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Aile içi şiddet, depresyon, kadın

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## INTRODUCTION

While its forms and prevalence vary, domestic violence towards women is a universal problem experienced by women worldwide, which is an infringement of human rights and freedom.<sup>1</sup> In the report published by the World Health Organization (WHO), it is stated that approximately one-third of women experience physical and/or sexual violence throughout their lives.<sup>2</sup> According to WHO, their partner inflicts most of this violence. WHO reported that the prevalence of violence in developed countries is 23.2%, while it is approximately 37% in developing countries.<sup>3</sup> In Türkiye, 44% of women experience emotional, 36% experience physical and 12% experience sexual violence.<sup>4</sup>

It is stated that factors such as low educational level, witnessing domestic violence, and childhood exposure to abuse and violence influence women's vulnerability to higher rates of domestic violence.<sup>2</sup> Research in Turkey shows that domestic violence occurs in the form of male violence against women and is more common.<sup>5</sup> In Türkiye, which has a patriarchal social structure, the risk of women experiencing violence increases even more. It is known that patriarchal culture is a factor that legitimizes domestic violence.<sup>6</sup> Women between the ages of 15-49 constitute a risk group regarding many factors that threaten health. One of these factors is depression. Depression affects women twice as much as men.<sup>7</sup> A study conducted in our country determined that 36.4% of women between the ages of 15-49 had depression, and there was a significant relationship between exposure to violence and depression.<sup>8</sup> It is stated that exposure to violence leads women to experience problems that affect their physical, mental, sexual and reproductive health negatively. At the top of these problems, physical and mental behavioral changes, hopelessness, and depression, which accompany cognitive function and mood deteriorations, have a significant place.<sup>4,9-11</sup> Furthermore, WHO reported that women who experience violence have 2 times higher rates of depression than those who do not experience violence.<sup>3</sup>

Likewise, the prevalence of depression in the world has been determined as 4.4%, and it is considered that domestic violence, a stressful life event, is one of the most significant risk factors for depression.<sup>1,12</sup>

In the study, it was aimed to determine the relationship between depression and domestic violence toward women.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Ethics Committee Approval:** The ethical approval for the study was obtained. This study was conducted to determine the relationship between depression

and domestic violence towards women at the Health Sciences Scientific Research and Publications Ethics Board of Inonu University (Date: 17/03/2020, decision no: 2020/549). All procedures have been carried out in accordance with the Helsinki Declaration.

**Study Design and Participants:** This cross-sectional study was conducted to determine the relationship between domestic violence toward women and depression.

The study was conducted with married women registered at Family Health Centers (FHC) located in the city center of a province in eastern Turkey. The population covered all women registered at the FHCs in this city center. In contrast, the sample consisted of 464 married women who agreed to participate in the study and met the inclusion criteria. In calculating the required sample size, the sample size with unknown population formula was used, and the values of the research article published by Tel et al. in 2019 (p: 0.305, q: 0.695) were taken as a reference.<sup>16</sup> According to this formula, the required sample size was a minimum of 326 women. The inclusion criteria were: Being a woman and married and having no communication problems.

**Data Collection:** A Descriptive Information Form, the Domestic Violence Scale and the Beck Depression Inventory were used in the study as the data collection instruments. This form that was prepared by the researchers based on the literature review consisted of 10 questions (age, gender, age of marriage, education level, etc.).

**Domestic Violence Scale:** The 30-item scale form developed by Çetiner in 2006 to determine the dimensions and conditions of violence experienced in the family was tested for validity and reliability by İdiz.<sup>17</sup> It is a 5-point Likert-type scale. The scale is coded as 1 'never,' 2 'rarely,' 3 'sometimes,' 4 'often,' and 5 'always.' There is no reverse-scored item in the scale. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale was reported as 0.95.<sup>17</sup>

**Beck Depression Inventory (BDI):** In the Turkish validity and reliability inventory study by Hisli in 1989, the Beck Depression Inventory consists of 21 items and four options for each item. Each item is scored in the range of 0-3, while the total score range is 0-63. The cutoff point of the Turkish form of the inventory was determined as 17.<sup>18</sup>

**Data analysis:** The statistical analyses of the data of the study were performed by using the SPSS 22.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) package software. Frequencies, percentages, and means were used as descriptive statistics, while ANOVA, t-test, correlation, and regression analyses were used to compare the scales and sociodemographic characteristics. The results were accepted as statistically significant in a confidence interval of 95% and a signif-

ificance level of  $p < 0.05$ .

## RESULTS

Among the women who participated in the study, 25.4% were high school graduates, 70.5% were not employed, the spouses of 91.8% were employed, 60.3% had arranged marriages, the husbands of 69.8% called the shots at home, 79.5% were satisfied with their husbands, their mean age was  $36.54 \pm 9.32$  years, the mean age of their husbands was  $40.35 \pm 9.83$  years, and their mean duration of

marriage was  $14.91 \pm 10.90$  years. The women's mean score on the Domestic Violence Scale was  $42.58 \pm 15.96$ , while their mean Beck Depression Inventory score was  $10.32 \pm 8.92$  (Table 1).

As the level of domestic violence increased, the probability of depression in women increased. As the age of the woman, the period of her husband, and the duration of marriage increased, their levels of being subjected to violence and depression levels increased ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 2).

**Table 1.** Descriptive characteristics and mean scale scores of the women.

Characteristic	n (%)	
Education level	Illiterate	32 (6.9)
	Primary school	123 (26.5)
	Secondary school	82 (17.7)
	High school	118 (25.4)
Employed	University and higher	109 (23.5)
	Yes	137 (29.5)
Spouse employed	No	327 (70.5)
	Yes	426 (91.8)
Form of marriage	No	38 (8.2)
	Arranged marriage	280 (60.3)
Exposed to violence from spouse	Dating marriage	184 (39.7)
	Yes	90 (19.4)
Who calls the shots at home?	No	374 (80.6)
	Me	140 (30.2)
Satisfied with spouse	My husband	324 (69.8)
	Yes	369 (79.5)
	No	95 (20.5)
	$\bar{X} \pm SD$	
Age		$36.54 \pm 9.32$
Age of the spouse		$40.35 \pm 9.83$
Years of marriage		$14.91 \pm 10.90$
Domestic Violence Scale		$42.58 \pm 15.96$
Beck Depression Inventory		$10.32 \pm 8.92$

**Table 2.** Correlation analysis between the scales and some sociodemographic characteristics.

	Age r	p	Spouse age r	p	Duration of marriage r	p	Depression r	p
Domestic Violence Scale	0.156**	0.001	0.173**	0.000	0.160**	0.001	0.582**	0.000
BDI	0.219**	0.000	0.223**	0.000	0.202**	0.000	-	-

\*\* :  $p < .01$ ; r: bivariate correlation; BDI: Beck Depression Inventory .

As the participants' education levels decreased, their domestic violence exposure levels and depression levels increased ( $p < 0.05$ ). Both the domestic violence exposure and depression levels of the women who were not employed were higher in comparison to the women who were employed ( $p < 0.05$ ). The domestic violence exposure and depression levels of the women whose husbands were not employed were higher than those whose husbands were employed ( $p < 0.05$ ). The domestic violence exposure

and depression levels of the women who had arranged marriages were higher than those who got married after dating ( $p < 0.05$ ). Those who were exposed to violence from their spouses had higher scores on the Domestic Violence Scale and Beck Depression Inventory than those who were not exposed to violence ( $p < 0.05$ ). Those who were not satisfied with their spouses had higher scores on the Domestic Violence Scale and Beck Depression In-

ventory than those who were satisfied with their spouses ( $p < 0.05$ ) (Table 3).

As a result of simple linear regression analysis, a significant relationship ( $R = 0.68$ ;  $R^2 = 0.46$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) was found between the sociodemographic characteristics of women's domestic violence. A significant relationship ( $R = 0.56$ ;  $R^2 = 0.32$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) was found between the sociodemographic characteristics of the women and beck depression. It

was determined that the sociodemographic characteristics of the women (age, spouse age, educational level, duration of marriage, exposure to violence from spouse, employment status, spouse employment status, who calls the shots at home, a form of marriage, wanting to marry the same person if she were born again) who participated in the study were cumulatively effective on domestic violence by 46% and depression by 32% (Table 4).

**Table 3.** Comparison of sociodemographic characteristics and Domestic Violence Scale and Beck Depression Inventory Scores.

		Domestic Violence			Depression		
		X±SD	Test statistic	p	X±SD	Test statistic	p
<b>Education level</b>	Illiterate	49.63±18.51			15.41±10.79		
	Primary school	44.22±15.54			12.46±9.11		
	Secondary school	40.96±12.92	2.859 <sup>a</sup>	0.023*	9.51±8.47	6.640 <sup>a</sup>	0.000**
	High school	42.47±17.37			8.86±7.53		
	University and higher	39.98±15.61			8.61±8.94		
<b>Employed</b>	Yes	41.26±16.99			8.88±8.03		
	No	43.13±15.51	-1.148 <sup>b</sup>	0.251	10.93±9.21	-2.260 <sup>b</sup>	0.024*
<b>Spouse employed</b>	Yes	41.72±14.84			9.76±8.43		
	No	52.24±23.56	-3.952 <sup>b</sup>	0.000**	16.66±11.61	-4.668 <sup>b</sup>	0.000**
<b>Form of marriage</b>	Arranged marriage	44.09±16.27			11.82±9.22		
	Dating marriage	40.28±15.24	2.530 <sup>b</sup>	0.012*	8.05±7.94	4.544 <sup>b</sup>	0.000**
<b>Satisfied with spouse</b>	Yes	38.29±10.25			8.33±7.02		
	No	59.22±22.18	-13.413 <sup>b</sup>	0.000**	18.06±11.09	-10.548 <sup>b</sup>	0.000**

<sup>a</sup>: ANOVA; <sup>b</sup>: t-test; \*:  $p < 0.05$  \*\*:  $p < 0.01$ .

**Table 4.** Regression analysis of the sociodemographic characteristics of the women and their domestic violence and depression characteristics.

Model	Domestic Violence Scale					Beck Depression Inventory				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std Error	Beta	t	p	B	Std Error	Beta	t	p
<b>(Constant)</b>	46.817	8.198		5.711	0.000	11.321	5.164		2.192	0.029
<b>Age</b>	0.086	0.206	0.050	0.415	0.678	0.200	0.130	0.209	1.539	0.125
<b>Spouse age</b>	-0.008	0.191	-0.005	-0.042	0.966	-0.067	0.120	-0.074	-0.556	0.578
<b>Education level</b>	-0.013	0.622	0.001	-0.020	0.984	-0.417	0.392	-0.060	-1.065	0.287
<b>Duration of marriage</b>	-0.092	0.130	-0.063	-0.707	0.480	-0.122	0.082	-0.149	-1.486	0.138
<b>Exposure to violence from spouse</b>	-17.668	1.533	-0.438	-11.522	0.000	-7.019	0.966	-0.311	-7.266	0.000

B: unstandardized coefficients; Std Error: standard error; Beta: standardized coefficients;  $R^2$ : determination coefficient; F: Anova;  $p < 0.05$ .

Table 4. Continue.

Model	Domestic Violence Scale					Beck Depression Inventory				
	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std Error	Beta	t	p	B	Std Error	Beta	t	p
Employment status	-1.068	1.342	-0.031	-0.796	0.427	0.143	0.845	0.007	0.170	0.865
Spouse employment status	2.489	2.104	0.043	1.183	0.238	3.121	1.325	0.096	2.355	0.019
Who calls the shots at home	4.092	1.217	0.118	3.362	0.001	0.291	0.767	0.015	0.379	0.705
Form of marriage	0.502	1.445	0.015	0.347	0.729	-1.297	0.910	-0.071	-1.424	0.155
Wanting to marry the same person if she were born again	14.739	1.481	0.373	9.952	0.000	6.614	0.933	0.299	7.090	0.000
	R=0 .68	R <sup>2</sup> = 0.46	F=39.520	p= 0.000		R=0 .56	R <sup>2</sup> =0 .32	F= 21.454	p=0 .000	

B: unstandardized coefficients; Std Error: standard error; Beta: standardized coefficients; R<sup>2</sup>: determination coefficient; F: Anova; p<0.05.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Domestic violence is a significant societal problem that may lead to problems in social life and depression by negatively affecting individuals' mental health. Most of those exposed to violence are women. In women exposed to domestic violence, obstacles, disappointments, reductions in self-respect, and traumas are among the top factors preceding depression.<sup>19-21</sup> This study was conducted to determine the relationship between domestic violence toward women and depression, and the results are discussed here in light of the relevant literature.

In the literature, it has been determined that women who are inflicted violence by their partners are more at risk of psychological symptoms such as depression and anxiety.<sup>19,21-23</sup> It was determined that the domestic violence exposure and depression levels of the women who participated in this study were low. Some sociodemographic characteristics affected depression by 32% and domestic violence by 46%. Hsieh and Shu<sup>24</sup> found that demographic variables were effective on depression by 59.5%, while Cao et al.<sup>25</sup> determined that they were effective on violence by around 35%. Kavak et al.<sup>26</sup> found the levels of domestic violence among women high. While there have been differences in the rates of exposure to violence in previous studies, it is seen that women are exposed to violence, and depressive symptoms accompany this situation.<sup>27,28</sup> In this study, it was observed that, as domestic violence increased, depression also increased. The study has reported that depression is observed among women with a history of violence.<sup>29</sup> Domestic violence is an important global problem. Women who are exposed to violence distance themselves from those around them due to the phenomenon of violence, and they may adopt a more isolated lifestyle. It is thought that this situation will lead women to experience more de-

pression. Moreover, women subjected to violence feel weak, valueless, forgotten, and unimportant. The emotions they experience against violence, like anger and helplessness, lead them to share intense depressive feelings.<sup>11</sup>

In this study, it was determined that both the domestic violence and depression levels of the illiterate women, those who were not employed, those whose spouses were not used, those who got arranged marriages, those who were exposed to violence, and those who were not satisfied with their spouses were higher. In the study by Akalın and Arıkan<sup>11</sup>, it was observed that women who married with arranged marriages experienced more depressive symptoms, domestic violence was more frequent, and depressive symptom rates were higher in the groups with low education and income levels. Another study has reported that women who have arranged marriages experience more depressive symptoms.<sup>11</sup> It is thought that having an arranged marriage increases violence and depression rates as it is a situation that prevents the woman from deciding on one of the most important aspects of her life, makes her dependent, neglects her autonomy, and harms her confidence.<sup>11</sup> Higher education levels increase the coping skills of individuals and allow development of their sense of control. This way, women can find the power to fight against violence in themselves, and depression rates decrease.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, high education levels may increase women's opportunities of finding a job and make an economic contribution.<sup>9,25</sup> It was reported that a person's employment status affects their mental health and well-being.<sup>29</sup> Studies have determined a relationship between education levels and depression symptoms, and it has been found that depressive symptoms are higher among groups with low education levels, and as education levels increase, the rates of depressive symptoms

decrease.<sup>11,27</sup> Similarly, Cao et al. stated that low education levels and unemployment of family members increased the likelihood of practicing violence among family members.<sup>25</sup>

In conclusion, it was determined that both the domestic violence and depression scores of the participants were low, and the mean depression score of the women who were exposed to violence was higher than those who were not. Women may hide an event of violence in the family due to environmental pressure, family pressure, and economic problems. It is believed that ensuring that this violence is identified by women and increasing their awareness to a level on which they can access the required help will contribute to their healthier mental state. Essential duties fall upon healthcare professionals in this matter. It is thought that increasing the awareness of women against emotional states such as fear, lack of confidence, and helplessness and life events and arranging policies to prevent violence as a country will carry great importance in preventing violence. A limitation of the current study concerns the generalizability of results. The results can be generalized to the population and region of the study.

**Ethics Committee Approval:** This study was approved by the Health Sciences Scientific Research and Publications Ethics Board of Inonu University (Date: 17/03/2020, decision no: 2020/549).

**Conflict of Interest:** No conflict of interest was declared by the authors.

**Author Contributions:** Concept – KI; Supervision – HU, KI, HY; Materials –KI, HY; Data Collection and/or Processing –HU, HY; Analysis and/ or Interpretation – HU, KI, HY; Writing – HU, KI, HY.

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