

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Attitudes of Forensic Cases Towards Violence Against Women and Affecting Factors

Adli Olguların Kadına Yönelik Şiddet Hakkındaki Tutumları ve Etkileyen Faktörler

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aims to determine the attitudes of forensic cases who applied to Pamukkale University Faculty of Medicine Department of Forensic Medicine towards violence against women and to investigate variables affecting attitudes.

Method: 152 participants filled out questionnaire consisting of 45 questions, sociodemographic characteristics, violence type, and ISKEBE Violence against Women Attitude Scale.

Result: When ISKEBE scale mean scores of participants were examined, total score and score of subscales related to attitudes towards identity were found higher in females. The total score and the mean scores of both subgroups of those who were single, those whose education level was high school or higher both for themselves and for their spouses, and those living in the city center were statistically significantly higher. The mean score of the sub-groups regarding the total score and attitudes towards the body of those who did not have children was statistically significantly higher.

Conclusion: It was determined in our study, in which the attitudes of forensic cases who had experienced a traumatic process related to violence against women and the factors affecting these attitudes were evaluated, that in general, similar findings emerged with the studies in which other groups in the society were evaluated. We agree that implementing education policies that are prepared considering society gender roles, especially the sexist and patriarchal attitudes of men towards women, that cover all segments of society, would be important to change attitudes related to violence against women.

Keywords: Violence against women, Forensic cases, Attitude scale, Gender

ÖZ

Amaç: Bu çalışma, Pamukkale Üniversitesi Tıp Fakültesi Adli Tıp Anabilim Dalı'na başvuran adli olguların kadına yönelik şiddete yönelik tutumlarını belirlemeyi ve şiddete yönelik tutumlarını etkileyen değişkenleri araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Metod: Araştırmaya katılan 152 gönüllü adli olgu tarafından, toplam 45 sorudan oluşan, olguların sosyodemografik özellikleri, şiddet görme durumu, kim tarafından şiddet gördüğü ve şiddetin türü ile ISKEBE Kadına Yönelik Şiddet Tutum Ölçeği doldurulmuştur.

Bulgular: Katılımcıların cinsiyete göre ISKEBE ölçeği toplam puan ve kimliğe yönelik tutumlarıyla ilgili alt grup ortalamaları kadınlarda istatistiksel olarak anlamlı daha yüksek bulunmuştur. Bekar olanların, öğrenim durumu hem kendisi için hem de eşi için lise ve üzeri olanların ve il merkezinde yaşayanların toplam puan ve her iki alt grup ortalaması istatistiksel olarak anlamlı daha yüksek bulunmuştur. Çocuk sahibi olmayanların toplam puan ve bedene yönelik tutumlarıyla ilgili alt grup puan ortalaması istatistiksel olarak anlamlı daha yüksek bulunmuştur.

Sonuç: Travmatik süreç yaşamış olan adli olguların kadına yönelik şiddetle ilişkili tutumlarının ve bu tutumları etkileyen faktörlerin değerlendirildiği çalışmamızda, toplumdaki başka grupların değerlendirildiği çalışmalarla genel olarak benzer bulgular ortaya çıkmıştır. Kadına yönelik şiddetle ilişkili tutumları değiştirmek için, öncelikle toplumsal cinsiyet rollerine yönelik, özellikle erkeklerin kadınlara yönelik cinsiyetçi ve ataerkil tutumları göz önüne alınarak, toplumun her kesimini kapsayan eğitim politikalarının önemli olacağı düşünülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadına yönelik şiddet, Adli olgular, Tutum ölçeği, Toplumsal cinsiyet

Introduction

Even in the 21st century, violence remains one of the biggest public health problems of humanity. While violence manifests itself in all spheres of life, it mostly occurs in the form of "violence against women" in Türkiye and around the world. Women encounter different types of violence in physical, emotional, economic and sexual areas (1). Violence against women is a society gender-based violence that is recognized as a fundamental human rights violation by the international community, and can take various forms and appear in different contexts, and is accepted as a social and public health problem of epidemic proportions (2). It is known that about 30% of women worldwide are exposed to physical or

sexual violence. This rate increases up to 37% in Eastern Mediterranean countries (3). This prevalence of violence against women brings about a wide range of effects that lead to physical, psychological and sexual health problems such as pain, depression, substance abuse, sexually transmitted diseases, and suicide attempts. Such negative consequences may persist for years in a way to further damage the women's daily functions and the health of their children (4).

Recursing violence, being exposed to violence and displaying an attitude close to violence are effective in the prevalence and continuation of violence in society (5). Attitudes play an important role in the

committing of violence against women, victims' reactions to victimization, and society's reactions to violence against women. The main goal of community education campaigns aimed at preventing violence against women has been attitudes on this issue. However, coordinated analysis of the factors that shape attitudes towards violence against women is relatively scarce (6). Making reliable and valid measurements that assess attitudes related to violence against women is important for research and intervention purposes, as it can provide information about the social conditions influencing these attitudes (7).

It is known that most of the patients who apply to health institutions and comply with the definition of a forensic case experience traumatic processes such as pounding, stab wound, and firearm injury (8–11). It has been reported that traumatic experiences can change an individual's attachment styles, prevent secure attachment, and thus affect attitudes and behaviors related to violence (12–14).

This study aims to determine the attitudes of forensic cases admitted to Pamukkale University Faculty of Medicine, Department of Forensic Medicine towards violence against women and to investigate the variables affecting those attitudes.

Method

Our study was conducted as a cross-sectional study. Its population consisted of the cases between the ages of 18 and 65 and literate who applied to Pamukkale University Hospital, Forensic Medicine outpatient clinic. The sample size calculation was performed using the G power 3.1 software. Assuming that the distribution of the scale between the groups would be of medium effect size, the number of people required to participate in the study was calculated to be at least 146, taking the type 1 error (α) as 0.05, and the power of the study as $(1-\beta)$ 0.85. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from Pamukkale University Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee, (11.06.2019/78473), then the data of the study were collected between November 2019 and April 2020. A total of 152 people participated in the research in the planned time. The questionnaire, the data collection tool of the study, was filled in by the cases who volunteered to participate in the study. In the questionnaire consisting of 45 questions, the sociodemographic characteristics of the cases, the state of being subjected to violence, by whom the violence was perpetrated, and the ISKEBE Attitude Scale (with a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.86) were used.

The ISKEBE attitude scale has been developed to determine individuals' violent attitudes against women (15). The scale has psychometric properties that it can be applied to individuals (male or female, married or single) who are at least primary school graduates and are between the ages of 15 and 65.

The ISKEBE attitude scale is made up of two subscales and a total of 30 items. The first subscale consist of 16 items (3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 22, 25, 26, 28, 30) related to attitudes towards the body (sexual and physical violence). The second subscale, on the other hand, contains 14 items (1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 27, 29) regarding attitudes towards the identity (psychological and economic violence). The 5th and 24th questions in the scale are scored in reverse. The total score of the scale is obtained by summing the scores from the two subscales. The lowest score to be obtained from the first subscale is 16, and the highest score is 80. In the second subscale, the lowest and highest scores that can be obtained are 14 and 70, respectively. The lowest score that can be obtained from the total scale is 30 and the highest score is 150. In this study, the Cronbach's α coefficient was found 0.80 for the first subscale, 0.83 for the second subscale and 0.86 for the total scale. High scores indicate that the approach to violence against women is negative (the person is against violence against women), while low scores indicate that the approach to violence against women is positive (the person is not against violence against women).

The SPSS 17.1 software package was used in the statistical analysis of the data. The descriptive statistics were expressed as numbers and percentages for categorical variables, and as mean and standard deviation for continuous variables. The conformity of continuous variables to the normal distribution was examined by analytical methods (Kolmogorov-Smirnov/Shapiro-Wilk tests). The Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal-Wallis H tests were utilized for the comparison of medians. The p-value less than 0.05 was considered significant.

Results

The mean age of the people participating in the study was 35.3 ± 12.7 , and 71.3% of them were men. Of the participants, 46.7% were married and 55% reported that they had a child or children. It was found that 29.8% of the participants were high school graduates. The rate of participants living in city center was 60.5%. A substantial portion of the participants (54.5%) stated to have a nuclear family. Of the mothers, fathers and spouses of the participants, 53.2%, 53.3% and 35.9%, respectively, were primary school graduates. As for at the income level, 47% indicated that it was in the range of 0-2500 TRY. The rate of participants who were subjected to violence was 50.3%, while 13.2% stated to have been subjected to violence by their spouse (Table 1).

When the ISKEBE scale mean scores of the participants were examined, the total score and the score of the subscale related to the attitudes towards the identity were found higher in the females, and the difference was statistically significant. The total score and both subscales were statistically significantly higher for the participants who were single, those living in city center, and both

Table 1. Socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the participants

Variables	n	%
Age (Mean ± SD)	35.32 ± 12.76	
Gender*		
Female	44	28.7
Male	108	71.3
Marital status		
Never been married	64	42.1
Married	71	46.7
Divorced	17	11.2
Status of having child(ren)*		
Yes	83	55.0
No	68	45.0
Number of children (Mean ± SD)	2.27 ± 1.15	
Educational status*		
Primary school	35	23.2
Middle school	40	26.5
High school	45	29.8
University	1	20.5
Place of residence		
City centre	92	60.5
Town	35	23.0
Village	25	16.4
Family type raised*		
Nuclear	79	54.5
Extended	23	15.9
Broken	14	9.7
Other	29	20.0
Maternal Education level		
Not literate	27	18.2
Literate	18	12.2
Primary school	79	53.4
Middle school	10	6.8
High school	13	8.8
University	1	0.6
Paternal Education level*		
Not literate	5	3.6
Literate	20	14.6
Primary school	73	53.3
Middle school	19	13.9
High school	13	9.5
University	7	5.1
Spouse's education level		
Not literate	5	6.4
Literate	2	2.6
Primary school	28	35.9
Middle school	14	17.9
High school	15	19.2
University	14	17.9
Income level*		
0-2500 TRY	68	47.6
2500-4000 TRY	36	25.2
4000-6000 TRY	29	20.3
6000 TRY and above	10	7.0
Status of being subjected to violence*		
Yes	76	50.3
No	75	49.7
Person committing the violence**		
Spouse	20	13.2
Own family	7	4.6
Spouse's family	4	2.6
Other	53	34.9

*Missing data.

**More than one response have been marked

themselves and their spouses had an education level of high school or above. Those who did not have children were found to have a statistically significantly higher ISKEBE total score and the score of the subscale regarding the attitudes towards the body. Those who grew up with a broken family had a higher ISKEBE total score ($p = 0.032$). It was determined that the mean total score of the ISKEBE Attitudes Against Women Scale of the participants was 115.63 ± 20.12 , the mean score of the Attitude Toward Body subscale was 72.30 ± 9.85 , and the mean score of the Attitude Toward Identity subscale was 44.61 ± 13.44 (Table 2).

Discussion

In this study, the attitudes towards violence against women and the affecting factors of forensic cases who had experienced a traumatic process such as pounding, firearm injury, cutting/piercing tool injury, work accident and traffic accident were evaluated. It was observed that the participants generally had an attitude against violence against women according to the total score means of the ISKEBE Attitudes Against Women Scale. While evaluating this result, it should be taken into account that people who are in an official institution for a purpose, where forensic cases apply to the department to apply for a necessary action to be taken, may tend to have a positive approach to a questionnaire or scale questions. However, it is noteworthy that the mean score of attitude towards identity (psychological and economic violence) subscale was low. It is understood that being women, being single, living in city center, not having children and high level of education of themselves and the spouse, if any, had positively affected the attitudes of the participants toward violence against women. Considering the gender of the forensic cases, the majority of those are known to be male (8–10). Most of the participants in our study were also male. However, the mean scores of the scales were statistically significantly higher in females than males. In the studies conducted in Türkiye and other countries, it has been reported that the attitudes of males related to violence against women were usually negative (16–18). It can be said that the structure of society in which people grow up with discriminatory and unequal gender roles cause this situation.

A systematic review investigating the protective and risky factors related to violence against women stated that the higher education level of the individual and his/her spouse was a protective factor (4). Similarly, it was observed in our study that the mean scores were significantly higher when the participant and his/her spouse had a high level of education.

Of the participants, 50% indicated that they had been subjected to violence at least once by their own family, spouse, spouse's family and other people at some point in their lives. It was found that 31 participants had been subject to domestic violence and 53 had been subjected to violence by people other than the family. Some of the participants, on the other hand,

Table 2. The ISKEBE total and subscale mean scores with respect to the participants' characteristics.

Variables	Total score	p	Subscale 1 (attitudes towards the body)	p	Subscale 2 (attitudes towards the identity)	p
All participants	115.63 ± 20.12		72.30 ± 9.85		44.61 ± 13.44	
Gender						
Female	121.67 ± 19.69	0.01	73.35 ± 9.48	0.25	49.72 ± 12.83	0.003
Male	113.31 ± 20.03		71.86 ± 10.10		42.70 ± 13.25	
Marital status	121.73 ± 17.87		75.20 ± 7.58		48.28 ± 13.41	
Never been married						
Married	109.94 ± 19.68	0.001	70.06 ± 10.11	0.002	40.89 ± 12.71	0.007
Divorced	116.41 ± 24.00		70.82 ± 13.60		46.41 ± 13.12	
Status of having child(ren)						
Yes	112.73 ± 20.26	0.026	70.58 ± 10.77	0.007	43.12 ± 13.04	0.153
No	119.88 ± 18.60		74.78 ± 7.63		46.76 ± 13.61	
Educational status						
Middle school and below	109.00 ± 21.16	<0.001	69.27 ± 11.22	<0.001	40.67 ± 12.85	0.001
High school and above	121.80 ± 16.73		75.21 ± 7.26		48.21 ± 12.86	
Longest-lived place of residence.						
City centre	121.22 ± 15.67	<0.001	74.92 ± 7.48	<0.001	47.88 ± 11.86	<0.001
Town	113.23 ± 22.07		70.83 ± 9.16		43.69 ± 14.87	
Village	98.44 ± 22.15		64.76 ± 13.83		33.92 ± 11.42	
Family type raised*						
Nuclear	112.35 ± 20.99	0.032	70.52 ± 10.94	0.129	43.11 ± 13.45	0.227
Extended	116.52 ± 18.57		73.83 ± 7.60		43.65 ± 13.36	
Broken	122.79 ± 19.33		74.36 ± 7.58		50.14 ± 14.25	
Maternal education level						
Middle school and below	114.51 ± 20.71	0.084	71.84 ± 10.20	0.121	43.94 ± 13.66	0.076
High school and above	125.00 ± 11.66		76.36 ± 5.34		50.43 ± 11.22	
Paternal educational level						
Middle school and below	113.80 ± 20.93	0.060	71.72 ± 10.46	0.241	43.32 ± 13.61	0.046
High school and above	124.30 ± 16.56		75.15 ± 6.80		50.80 ± 13.93	
Spouse's education level						
Middle school and below	105.59 ± 21.92	0.014	67.76 ± 12.44	0.023	38.59 ± 12.76	0.017
High school and above	118.76 ± 14.33		74.48 ± 6.23		45.72 ± 11.44	
Income level						
0-2500 TRY	114.28 ± 21.31		71.74 ± 9.78		43.66 ± 14.77	
2500-4000 TRY	119.94 ± 14.37	0.563	74.92 ± 7.14	0.190	46.44 ± 11.41	0.776
4000-6000 TRY	117.07 ± 18.91		73.52 ± 8.48		45.34 ± 12.35	
6000 TRY and above	114.70 ± 25.35		69.20 ± 12.94		46.90 ± 15.06	
Status of being subjected to violence						
Yes						
No	116.12 ± 19.83	0.779	72.32 ± 10.19	0.664	45.24 ± 13.51	0.651
	115.15 ± 20.66		72.24 ± 9.62		44.05 ± 13.53	
Person committing the violence						
Spouse						
Yes	117.55 ± 21.11	0.560	71.45 ± 11.79	0.595	47.00 ± 12.67	0.328
No	115.34 ± 20.03		72.44 ± 9.57		44.26 ± 13.57	
Person committing the violence						
Own family						
Yes	111.57 ± 26.97	0.752	65.57 ± 14.46	0.152	46.86 ± 16.51	0.626
No	115.83 ± 19.83		72.63 ± 9.53		44.51 ± 13.34	
Person committing the violence						
Spouse's family						
Yes	121.75 ± 12.61	0.588	71.00 ± 11.6	0.709	52.75 ± 6.7	0.171
No	115.47 ± 20.29		72.34 ± 9.85		44.40 ± 13.53	
Person committing the violence						
Other						
Yes	116.55 ± 18.67	0.862	73.23 ± 8.89	0.591	45.09 ± 13.74	0.918
No	115.14 ± 20.93		71.82 ± 10.34		44.36 ± 13.35	

did not specify by whom they had been subjected to violence. It has been reported that people who witnessed or were personally exposed to violence, particularly children, were more likely to have (and commit) violence-supportive attitudes in the following time (6,19).

The overall scores and both subscale scores of the participants who have never married were found statistically significantly higher than the married and divorced participants. Besides, the means of the total and both subscale scores were higher among those with no children; the increase in the mean of total point and attitudes towards the body subscale score was statistically significant. The studies in the literature revealed that being married, particularly getting married at than early age and having children, early and unplanned pregnancies negatively affected the attitudes related to violence against women, and increased the risk of being subjected to violence (4,17,18).

Both the total and the two mean subscale scores were statistically significantly higher in the participants living in city center as compared to those living in towns or villages. It is reported that due to the fact that people living in cities with better socioeconomic conditions have easier access to social services, job opportunities and resources, their attitudes related to violence against women are also affected in a positive direction (4,7).

Although it is stated in the literature that high income level affect attitudes toward violence positively (6), it was observed that the effect of income level of participants on their attitudes regarding the violence against women was not significant in our study. In addition, it has been noted that women with a higher income level than their husbands had a higher risk of being exposed to violence against women, and the fact that woman's family had a higher income than man's family was also a protective factor (4,20).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results obtained in our study, in which the attitudes of forensic cases who have experienced a traumatic process related to violence against women and the affecting factors were examined, were generally similar to the studies evaluating other groups in the society. We are of the opinion that implementing education policies that are prepared taking into account the society gender roles, especially the sexist and patriarchal attitudes of men towards women, and that cover all segments of the society, would be important to change the attitudes related to violence against women.

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Conflict of Interest:

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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