

Original Article

## Domestic Violence among Women During the Covid-19 Pandemic in South Sulawesi, Indonesia

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### Abstract

**Background:** The incidence of domestic violence during the 2019 Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic is reported to have increased in several countries, including Indonesia. The increase in domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic is associated with economic problems. Domestic violence has a negative impact on women's health because it can cause physical and psychological trauma and disruption of reproductive health. **Aims:** To find out the description of domestic violence in women during the COVID-19 pandemic in South Sulawesi, Indonesia.

**Methods:** This study used a quantitative research design with a descriptive research method. 393 respondents were recruited in this study with the criteria of being married, living with a partner (husband) during the COVID-19 pandemic, and domiciled in South Sulawesi.

**Results:** The majority of respondents did not experience domestic violence, as many as 319 people (81.2%) and 74 people who experienced domestic violence (18.8%). Most of the respondents who experienced domestic violence were aged 20-35 years (71.6%), the last education was tertiary education (59.5%), worked as housewives (66.6%), spouses worked as an entrepreneur (54.1%), had monthly income < regional minimum wage (60.8%), had two children (75.7%) and had a nuclear family (55.4%).

**Conclusions:** Most women in South Sulawesi experience psychological violence. Future research suggests expanding the research sample so that the population can be represented and conducting a qualitative study.

**Key Words:** Domestic violence, women, COVID

### Introduction

The incidence of domestic violence increased in several countries during the Corona Virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. In 2020, Domestic violence against women in China in February increased threefold from the previous year (Fraser, 2020). Domestic violence against women in Jordan

has increased by 20.5% during the COVID-19 pandemic (Aolymat, 2020). The United States also reported an approximately 7.5 % increase in domestic violence from March to May 2020 (Leslie and Wilson, 2020). The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) also showed data on reports of increasing domestic violence in several countries, such as France, Argentina, Singapore, Canada,

Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom (UN Women, 2020).

The incidence of domestic violence in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic has also increased based on a survey by the Women National Community. Domestic violence is increasing among women living in the ten provinces with the highest exposure to COVID-19, and violence tends to increase, especially in married women with lower middle economic backgrounds, working in the informal sector, aged between 31-40 years, and having more than 3 children. The most common forms of violence are psychic violence and economic violence (Komnas Perempuan, 2020).

An increase in domestic violence occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic due to economic difficulties that could impact life in society (Sufiarina and Wahyuni, 2020). As a result, it can trigger stress, frustration, and depression, leading to family disputes and domestic violence (Ilesanmi, Ariyo, and Afolabi, 2020; Radhitya, 2020).

Domestic violence poses a serious threat to women's human rights, their physical and psychological well-being (Pandey, 2017). In addition, domestic violence can also interfere with women's reproductive health such as menstrual disorders and can experience menopause earlier (Fazraningtyas, Rahmayani and Rahmah, 2020).

Data from the Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS-Statistics Indonesia) (2020) showed that South Sulawesi Province has the highest number of domestic violence cases in Indonesia since 2017-2019 with 1,522 cases and dominated by women as victims of 1,247 people (82%) South Sulawesi Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Service (2021). However, Data related to forms of domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic in South Sulawesi has not yet available, so this study investigated the condition of domestic violence in women during the COVID-19 pandemic

## Methods

This research used quantitative research design with descriptive research methods (Notoatmodjo, 2018). This survey ran from June to July 2021. Respondents in this study were women domiciled in South Sulawesi, have being married and living with their partners during the COVID-19 pandemic, and were willing to be respondents

A series of short demographic questions were combined with a rating scale and open-ended questions to produce an anonymous online survey. Questionnaires to measure forms of violence against women were compiled by researchers from several sources (Lubis, 2013; Ramadani and Yuliani, 2015; Utama and Sukohar, 2015; Ford-gilboe *et al.*, 2016; Lujeng P *et al.*, 2016; Dewi and Hartini, 2017; Sari, 2019; Tendage, 2020) and have been given input by experts. In addition, this questionnaire has also been assessed for validity and reliability with a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.859.

The variables of respondents' characteristics and forms of domestic violence were measured using a questionnaire prepared by authors. Questionnaires of respondents' characteristics in the form of age, last education, occupation, spouse's occupation, amount of income, number of children, and family form. The domestic violence form questionnaire consists of 22 statements: F1-F7 statements related to forms of physical violence, P1-P8 statements related to forms of psychic violence, S1-S4 statements related to forms of sexual violence, and E1- E3 statements related to forms of economic violence.

The questionnaire uses the Guttman scale, where respondents will answer statements with a 'YES' or 'NO' answer. Respondents who answer 'YES' will be given a score of 1 and those who answer 'NO' will be given a score of 0. Information about the study and a link to the online survey was distributed electronically through social media outlets (including WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram). Before filling out the research questionnaire, prospective respondents were asked to fill out the attached respondent consent form before entering the research questionnaire page. This research has been approved by the Ethics Commission Faculty of Public Health Universitas Hasanuddin, with the number 4649/UN4.14.1/TP.01.01/2021.

## Results

All respondents totaled 393 people. There were 319 people (81.2%) who did not experience domestic violence and another 74 people (18.8%) experienced domestic violence. Respondents who experienced domestic violence were the most in the age range of 20-35 years (71.6%) with a college education background of 44 people (59.5%). Most respondents who experienced domestic violence

worked as housewives, namely 50 people (66.6%) and their spouses worked as self-employed as many as 40 people (54.1%). Respondents with monthly income below the regional minimum wage experienced the most domestic violence, namely 45 people (60.8%) and had  $\leq 2$  children 56 people (75.7%). When viewed from the form of family, which was included in the form of a nuclear family, the most domestic violence experienced, namely 41 people (55.4%). **(Shown in Table 1)**

Respondents who experienced domestic violence the most forms of emotional abusive, (75.7%), while physical violence became the least form of domestic violence (31.1%). Respondents who are in the age range of 20-25 years, their last educational history in college, work as a housewife, work for self-employed couples, had an income of less than regional minimum wage, have children  $\leq 2$ , and are included in the nuclear family category, being the respondents who experience the most forms of domestic violence, both physical, psychological, sexual, and economic. **(Shown in Table 2)**

The most physical violence experienced by respondents was violently encouraged by their partners with a total of (69.6%). Meanwhile, there were 5 people (21.7%) who stated that they had been strangled and 18 people (78.3%) who revealed that they had never been strangled, the figure showed the number of respondents who answered

the least 'Yes' and the number of respondents who answered the most 'No' of the seven statements of physical violence. **(Shown in Table 3)**

Psychic violence in the form of being prevented or prohibited from associating with the surrounding environment was most experienced by respondents, namely 31 people (55.4%). The least amount of psychic violence occurred in the P2 statement, namely only 7 people stated that they had experienced it (12.5%). **(Shown in Table 4)**

The form of sexual violence, namely being forced to have sexual intercourse while being sick or menstruating/ menstruating, was experienced by at least 10 respondents (34.5%), while the most common thing that happened to respondents was the S3 statement "*When having sexual intercourse, he only cares about his satisfaction without caring about my fatigue*" which was 19 people (65.5%). **(Shown in Table 5)**

Respondents who experienced the most economic violence stated that they had experienced economic violence in the form of not being properly supported, namely 22 respondents (84.6%). Being banned from work but abandoned by their spouses became the least economic violence that occurred in respondents, namely 7 people (26.9%). **(Shown in Table 6)**

**Table 1.** Characteristics of respondents who experienced and did not experience domestic violence in women during the COVID-19 pandemic in South Sulawesi (n=393)

Characteristics of Respondents	Domestic Violence			
	Yes		No	
	n	%	n	%
<b>Age</b>				
< 20 years	1	1.4	11	3.4
20-35 years	53	71.6	196	61.4
> 35 years	20	27.0	112	35.1
<b>Education</b>				
No School	0	0.0	0	0
Primary School	3	4.1	6	1.9
Junior High School	5	6.8	12	3.8
High School				

College	22	29.7	88	27.6
	44	59.5	213	66.8
<b>Employment</b>				
Military/police	0	0.0	0	0.0
Civil Servants	10	13.5	42	13.2
Private Employed	11	14.9	89	27.9
Self Employed	3	4.1	21	6.6
Housewife	50	66.6	167	52.4
<b>Spouse's Employment</b>				
Military/police	0	0.0	15	4.7
Civil Servants	4	5.4	45	14.1
Private Employed	25	32.4	128	40.4
Self Employed	40	54.1	123	38.6
Retired/No Work	6	8.1	7	2.2
<b>Income</b>				
< Regional minimum wage	45	60.8	170	53.3
≥ Regional minimum wage	29	39.2	149	46.7
<b>Number of Children</b>				
≤ 2 Children	56	75.7	236	74.0
> 2 Children	18	24.3	83	26.0
<b>Family Forms</b>				
<i>Nuclear Family</i>	41	55.4	188	58.9
<i>Extended Family</i>	33	44.6	131	41.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>81.2</b>

**Table 2.** Characteristics of respondents and the form of domestic violence experienced by women during the COVID-19 pandemic in South Sulawesi (n=74)

Characteristics of Respondents	Family Forms							
	Physical Violence		Psychic Violence		Sexual Violence		Economic Violence	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
<b>Age</b>								
< 20 Years	1	100.0	1	100.0	1	100.0	1	100.0
20-35 Years	19	35.8	43	81.1	25	47.2	15	28.3
> 35 Years	3	15.0	12	60.0	3	15.0	10	50.0
<b>Education</b>	0							
No School	1	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Primary School	3	33.3	2	66.7	0	0.0	1	33.3
Junior High School	9	60.0	5	100.0	1	20.0	1	20.0
High School	10	40.9	19	86.4	10	45.5	9	40.9

College	22.7	30	68.2	18	40.9	15	34.1
<b>Employment</b>							
Military/police	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0
Civil Servants	2	20.0	5	50.0	3	30.0	60.0
Private Employed	3	27.3	10	90.9	3	27.3	45.5
Self Employed	1	33.3	1	33.3	3	100.0	33.3
Housewife	17	34.0	40	80.0	20	40.0	28.0
<b>Spouse's Employment</b>							
Military/police	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0
Civil Servants	0	0.0	3	75.0	2	50.0	25.0
Private Employed	8	33.3	18	75.0	12	50.0	16.7
Self Employed	13	32.5	32	80.0	14	35.0	40.0
Retired/No Work	2	33.3	3	50.0	1	16.7	83.3
<b>Income</b>							
< Regional minimum wage							
≥ Regional minimum wage	14	31.1	36	80.0	13	28.9	37.8
	9	31.0	20	69.0	16	55.2	31.0
<b>Number of Children</b>							
≤ 2 Children	17	30.4	43	76.8	23	41.1	28.6
> 2 Children	6	33.3	13	72.2	6	33.3	55.6
<b>Family Forms</b>							
Nuclear Family	12	29.3	32	78.0	16	39.0	34.1
Extended Family	11	33.3	24	72.7	13	39.4	36.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>23 (31.1)</b>	<b>56 (75.7)</b>	<b>29 (39.2)</b>	<b>26 (35.1)</b>			

**Table 3.** Physical violence experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic in South Sulawesi based on a questionnaire statement (f=23)

Code	Sub Variables	Yes		No	
		f	%	f	%
F1	He hit me with his bare hands/using objects	14	60.9	9	39.1
F2	He slapped me	11	47.8	12	52.2
F3	He pushed me violently	16	69.6	7	30.4
F4	He grabbed my hair	9	39.1	14	60.9
F5	He kicked me	11	47.8	12	52.2
F6	He strangled me	5	21.7	18	78.3
F7	He stepped on me	6	26.1	17	73.9

**Table 4.** Psychic violence experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic in South Sulawesi based on questionnaire statements (f=56)

Code	Sub Variables	Yes		No	
		f	%	f	%
P1	He threatened to hurt or kill me or anyone closest to me (e.g., family, children, friend)	10	17.9	46	82.1
P2	He used or threatened to use a knife, pistol, or other weapon to harm me	7	12.5	49	87.5
P3	He demeaned and insulted me	29	51.8	27	48.2
P4	He yelled at me and said I was stupid, crazy, and not good enough to be a wife/mother	26	46.4	30	53.6
P5	He berated me	27	48.2	29	51.8
P6	He called me with a bad call (i.e., animal names)	23	41.1	33	58.9
P7	He prevented or forbade me to associate with the surrounding environment	31	55.4	25	44.6
P8	He controls all my actions so that I feel controlled by him	23	41.1	33	58.9

**Table 5.** Sexual violence experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic in South Sulawesi based on a questionnaire statement (f=56)

Code	Sub Variables	Yes		No	
		f	%	f	%
S1	He forced me to have sexual intercourse while I no longer wanted it	18	62.1	11	37.9
S2	He forced me to have sexual intercourse when I was sick or was menstruating	10	34.5	19	65.5
S3	When having sexual intercourse, he only cares about his satisfaction without caring about my fatigue	19	65.5	10	34.5
S4	When having sexual intercourse, he does something that makes me uncomfortable	12	41.4	17	58.6

**Table 6.** Economic violence experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic in South Sulawesi based on a questionnaire statement (f=26)

Code	Sub Variables	Yes		No	
		f	%	f	%
E1	He didn't provide for me/my family well	22	84.6	4	15.4
E2	He forbade me to work but abandoned me	7	26.9	19	73.1
E3	He let me work alone to provide for the family	10	38.5	16	61.5

### Discussion

The results of the study found that out of 393 respondents, there were 74 people who experienced domestic violence. This illustrates that 18.8% of women in South Sulawesi experience domestic violence during the COVID-19 pandemic. This percentage is higher than the results of a survey by Indonesian National Commission on Violence against Women which found that 8% of married women, aged 31-40 years, and earning below 5 million experienced an increase in violence during the pandemic. According to Indonesian National Commission on Violence against Women (2020) domestic violence is increasing in women living in the 10 provinces with the highest exposure to COVID-19. South Sulawesi is one of the provinces with the highest COVID-19 cases in Indonesia which occupies the sixth position (Satuan Tugas Penanganan Covid-19, 2021). Therefore, this research is in line with this.

Respondents who experience domestic violence are in the age range of 20-35 years. This is in line with the research of Edegbe, Okani, Uzoigwe, & Amagwu (2020) which found that women aged 20-49 years experienced the most domestic violence. Nevertheless, it was discovered by Boughima, Razine, Benyaich, & Mrabet (2018) women with an age range of 25-35 years often experience domestic violence. This was accordance with data shown by BPS-Statistics Indonesia (2015) that the age range of 19 to 25 years and above was the age group with the highest percentage (76.9%) of the age of married women. Therefore, most respondents in this study were included in the age of marriage so that the percentage who experienced domestic violence was higher than other ages.

Most respondents who experienced domestic violence had a history of college education. In contrast, research was conducted Khadilkar *et al.*, (2018) found that women who had a history of college education experienced the least domestic violence. This is because the wife's low level of education is related to the incidence of domestic violence (Yussar, Adamy and Marthoenis, 2019). Basar & Demirci (2018) stated that domestic violence is found to decrease along with the increase in the level of education, if the level of education of women increases then domestic violence will decrease.

More than half of respondents who experience domestic violence work as household. The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Kumari (2020) that women who do not work are more vulnerable to experiencing domestic violence. This is because the role of economic productivity in women can provide protection to them against domestic violence (Vachhani *et al.*, 2017).

Have a monthly income below the regional minimum wage and couples who work as self-employed people experience the most domestic violence. This can be attributed to the lower the social and economic status, the higher the domestic violence index (Junilavia, 2018). Research by Basar & Demirci (2018) also states that low social status is related to the incidence rate of domestic violence in Turkey. In addition, Moreira & Costa (2020) that domestic violence is known to be getting worse in the situation of economic and financial pressures experienced due to COVID-19.

Many respondents who experienced domestic violence had fewer than or equal to two children.

The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Boughima et al. (2018) that having children is less than or equal to the two most experienced domestic violence. However, based on the results of a survey conducted by Indonesian National Commission on Violence against Women (2020) found that women with more than 3 children experienced the highest domestic violence. The research of Lasong et al. (2020) also reported that women with high parity (5 or more children) are one of the risk factors for domestic violence.

Most of the respondents who experienced domestic violence had the form of a nuclear family. This is because there is no support system such as older family members or other family members who live in the same house. In the research of Ali, O’Cathain, & Croot (2018) mentioned that living in the same house with other members (extended family) has a positive effect in making decisions and has an important role such as mediating or providing solutions to conflicts faced by married couples. Therefore, the form of an extended family can minimize conflicts between married couples to reduce the risk of domestic violence.

The results showed that of the four forms of domestic violence, psychic violence was the most experienced form of violence experienced by respondents. This finding is in line with the results of the Indonesian National Commission on Violence against Women (2020) survey which revealed that psychic violence was the highest form of violence that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia.

The results of this study can be influenced by economic conditions that occurred during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Limited economic activities such as quiet trade, non-operating businesses, and a reduction in the number of workers have an impact on reducing family income (Sufiarina and Wahyuni, 2020). This triggers stress in the head of the family in meeting household needs (Potter and Perry, 2010). As a result, the release of stressors leads to venting to the closest person, such as the wife.

The form of venting is like demeaning and insulting the wife, berating the wife, and yelling at the wife by saying she is stupid, crazy, and not good enough to be a wife/mother. These harsh words significantly affect women's psychics because, psychologically, women prioritize feelings and consider things based

on emotions. Most husbands do not realize that what they have done constitutes domestic violence, which is why these harsh words will continue to be repeated. (Ramadani and Yuliani, 2015). Thus, the psychic burden of the wife will increase even more.

Psychic violence in the form of being prevented or prohibited from associating with the surrounding environment was most experienced by respondents. The findings are in line with qualitative research conducted by Dewi & Hartini (2017) that all women were restricted in their social activities by their partners. This can be caused by government policies in an effort to reduce the number of COVID-19 cases by implementing social restrictions (Tuwu, 2020).

The second most common form of violence experienced by respondents was sexual violence. Sexual violence in the form of only caring about the satisfaction of the husband without caring about the wife's fatigue when having sexual intercourse was most experienced by respondents. This is due to the government's policy in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic that advocates that work and activities that used to be done outside the home to be diverted to be done at home (Fuadi and Irdalisa, 2020). This results in the husband are spending more time with his wife so that it also has an impact on increasing the intensity of relationships. Excessive intensity of intercourse can make the wife experience fatigue and risk a decrease in the quality of the husband and wife's intimate relationship.

Economic violence became the third most common form of violence experienced by respondents. This is in line with research conducted by Esquivel-Santos (2020) that married women in Cabanatuan City experience the most economic violence. The economic violence most experienced by respondents was violence in the form of not being properly supported. This can be related to economic conditions during the pandemic which experienced a downturn. As a result, there is a decrease in income so that the husband's income is unable to support the family, thus encouraging the wife to take the initiative to find income to meet household needs. Other studies have also found that forms of economic violence in the form of not meeting household needs are most commonly carried out by husbands, due to insufficient income or unable to

support the family (Ramadani and Yuliani, 2015; Buaton, Maulita and Kristiawan, 2018).

The least form of violence experienced by respondents was physical violence. The results of the study was in line with a study conducted by Nadda et al. (2018) which found that physical violence occurred in Indian urban married women. Violence in the form of being violently encouraged was most experienced by respondents. Joshi, Arora, & Mukherjee (2020) in their research suggested that the main predictor of the occurrence of physical violence was women who have a controlling partner. This can be attributed to the job characteristics of the majority respondents as householders. In this case, women with housewife depend on their husbands in relation to the family economy. As a result, the wife tends to accept and submit to the treatment given by the husband.

### Conclusion

Majority of respondents did not experience domestic violence. The most common form of violence is psychic violence.

The results of this study are expected to be input to expand the research sample, take data to husbands, add marriage age data, and maintain communication with respondents to provide appropriate nursing interventions.

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