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## Domestic Violence against Women in Ethiopia: Statistical Analysis

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### Abstract

Domestic Violence (DV) is a significant public health issue worldwide. It is defined as an episode or a series of controlling behavior, coercion and threats against people aged 16 and above by either current or past intimate partners and (or) family members despite sexual orientation or gender and can take many forms, including emotional, sexual and physical abuse and threats of abuse. The general aim of this paper was to identify major factors influencing domestic violence against women in Ethiopia using Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey (2016) on domestic violence. A total of 4469 women who have ever married were included in the analysis and the result revealed that 35.2% of those women have experienced domestic violence from their husband/partner at some point in time. The result of binary logistic model confirmed that region, religion, wealth index, residing with husband/partner or not, husband's/partner's education level significantly influenced domestic violence against women. Therefore, critical emphasis should be given by the government and social workers in order to eliminate and/or minimize domestic violence against women in Ethiopia.

**Keywords:** Domestic violence, women, binary logistic regression

### Introduction

Violence is an intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal development or deprivation (WHO, 2005). Domestic Violence (DV) is a significant public health issue worldwide. It is defined as an episode or a series of controlling behavior, coercion and threats against people aged 16 and above by either current or past intimate partners and/or family members despite sexual orientation or gender (UK Home Office, 2013). Globally, at least one of every three women will suffer some form of violence that includes physical and sexual attacks in her lifetime. It is estimated that one in five women around the world will become a

victim of rape or attempted rape in her lifetime according to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, 2008). However, women are more at risk of experiencing violence from their intimate partners than from other persons. The most widely used model for understanding violence is the ecological model, which proposes that violence is a result of factors operating at four levels: individual, relationship, community and societal. Researchers have begun to examine evidence at these levels in different settings, to understand better the factors associated with variations in prevalence; however, there is still limited research on community and societal influences. Some risk factors are consistently identified across studies from many different countries, while others are context specific



and vary among and within countries (e.g. between rural and urban settings). It is also important to note that, at the individual level, some factors are associated with perpetration, some with victimization, and some with both (WHO, 2010). Domestic violence is a phenomenon found in all societies and among all social classes. Women who have experienced violent and forced-sex situations are at higher risk of acquiring sexually transmitted infections due to the risk of injuries and tearing during sexual intercourse. The mere suggestion of condom use can also spark off violence and in Africa, is often closely linked to the tradition of the husband's family paying the bride-price to the wife's family. This makes it extremely difficult for women to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS. Sexual violence against women is not only a cause but also a consequence of HIV infections. Women may be afraid of disclosing their HIV-positive test result to their husbands/partners because of fear of violence. The HIV status of women, therefore, can contribute towards higher degrees of domestic violence. In addition, a 2003 report by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) revealed considerable economic costs of intimate partner violence that exceed US\$ 5.8 billion per year in the United States. This indicates that violence against women impoverishes individuals, families and communities, thus reducing the economic development of nations (UNIFEM, 2008). Pregnant women between the ages of 20-30 years were the most common victims of DV reported in studies (Abasiubong et al., 2010; Ameh et al., 2009; Arulogun & Jidda, 2011; Awusi et al., 2009; Ezechi et al., 2004; Umeora et al., 2008) followed by women who were aged less than 20 years. One US study shows that among 3455 patients from 11 different emergency medicine providers, 37% have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from a current or former intimate partner at some point in their lives. Of these, 14.4% reported abuse within 12 months prior to the survey, and 2.2% were seeking medical care due to a current act of violence (Dearwater SR, et al. 1998). One survey carried out in a German first-aid/emergency ward setting questioned the prevalence of domestic violence among 806 female patients and reported the following statistics (Hellbernd H et al, 2004.): The life-time prevalence (from 16 years of age) for at least one of the three forms of domestic violence was 36.6%. Three-point five percent of the patients who had experienced violence were abused by their intimate partners during their pregnancy. DV during pregnancy poses significant risks to both the woman and her unborn child.

Victims of DV are prone to increased rates of sexually transmitted infections, premature births, miscarriages, unintended pregnancies, preeclampsia, vaginal bleeding, stillbirth, and low birth weight (Cook & Bewley, 2008; Garcia, Soria, & Hurwitz, 2007; Sharps, Laughon, & Giangrande, 2007; WHO, 2016). Mental health conditions such as postpartum depression, homicide and suicidal thoughts, anxiety, trauma and eating disorders are reported among women who are victims of abuse either before or during pregnancy (Beydoun, Beydoun, Kaufman, Lo, & Zonderman, 2012; Certain, Mueller, Jagodzinski, & Fleming, 2008; WHO, 2016). The consequences of DV and the low antenatal care seeking behavior among victims of DV are likely to increase infant and maternal morbidity and mortality rates (Sarkar, 2013). Researchers continue to disagree about whether DV prevalence increases, decreases, or remains about the same during pregnancy (Bailey, 2010). There are also wide variations in prevalence rates internationally. For example, a study among 19 countries found the prevalence rate of IPV during pregnancy as ranging between 2.0% to 31.5% (Devries et al., 2010). The authors assert that Latin American and African countries have higher rates of IPV during pregnancy compared to European and Asian countries (Devries et al. 2010). Existing research has consistently indicated a high prevalence of DV in pregnancy among women in African countries (Alio et al., 2009; Shamu, Abrahams, Temmerman, Musekiwa,

& Zarowsky, 2011; Uthman, Lawoko, & Moradi, 2009). A meta-analysis conducted by Shamu et al. (2011) has estimated the prevalence of IPV during pregnancy in African countries as ranging from 2%-57% (Shamu et al., 2011). A cross-sectional clinic-based survey of post-natal women conducted in Zimbabwe reported the prevalence of IPV during pregnancy to be 63.1% approximately (Shamu et al., 2013). In Nigeria, which is the most populated country in Sub-Saharan Africa, previous studies have reported a lifetime prevalence of physical abuse against women as 52.1% in the South-south zone, 31.0% in North-central, 29.6% in South-East, 28.9% in the South-West, 19.7% in the North-East and 13.1% in the North-West zone (National Population Commission, 2009). A more recent study reported the lifetime prevalence of spousal violence among cohabiting and married women in the Southwestern region of Nigeria as 47.3% approximately (Alo, Odusina, & Babatunde, 2012). In Ethiopia, domestic violence is widely acknowledged to be of great concern, not just from a human rights perspective, but also from an economic and health perspective (EDHS, 2016). More than one third of ever married

women (35 percent) report that they have experienced physical, emotional, or sexual violence from their husband or partner at some point in time. Twenty four percent of women report that they experienced emotional violence, 25 percent experienced physical violence, and 11 percent experienced sexual violence. Experience of physical, emotional, or sexual violence from a husband or partner is higher among older women 40-49 (38 percent), formerly married women (45 percent), those living in rural areas (36 percent), and women in Oromia (39 percent), Harari (38 percent), and Amhara (37percent). The Experience of spousal violence decreases with the increases in education level and household wealth (EDHS, 2016). Domestic violence threatens the lives and livelihood of Ethiopian women. Hence, this study is carried out using DHS 2016 data to assess and analyse contributing factors of domestic violence against ever-married women age 15-49 who have ever experienced emotional, physical, or sexual violence committed by their husband/partner in Ethiopia. The findings of the study will also help to design appropriate interventions to halt the practice in the study area.

## Methodology

This study was conducted in Ethiopia which is officially known as the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the second most populous country in sub-Saharan Africa with over 90 population using the data of Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) collected in 2016. The sample was designed to provide estimates of key indicators for the country as a whole, for urban and rural areas separately, and for each of the nine regions and the two administrative cities. Information was collected on both domestic violence (also known as spousal violence or intimate partner violence) and violence by other family members of unrelated individuals (EDHS, 2016). The dependent variable for this study is domestic violence against ever married women of age 15-49. A woman is said to be experienced domestic violence if she faced either of emotional, physical, or sexual violence or combination of the three committed by her husband/partner and coded as 1 if a woman experienced domestic violence and 0 otherwise. The predictor variables of the study are demographic and socio-economic variables which are expected to have an impact on domestic violence against ever married women age 15-49 in Ethiopia. This includes age of mother, place of residence, region, religion, wealth index, residing with husband or not, husband's education level. The binary logistic regression model

was used to investigate effect of those predictors on the probability of the response variables (Domestic Violence). The binary logistic regression procedure empowers one to select the predictive model for dichotomous dependent variables. It describes the relationship between a dichotomous response variable and a set of explanatory variables. The explanatory variables may be continuous or discrete (McCullagh and Nelder, 1989). The coefficient of binary logistic regression is interpreted as the change in the log-odds of experiencing domestic violence per unit change of the corresponding continuous covariate. In case of categorical predictor variable, it is interpreted as the log-odds of experiencing domestic violence given a category compared to the reference category (Agresti, 2007).

## Results and Discussion

### Results:

**Descriptive results:** The present study was carried out on 4469 of ever married women of age 15-49. Even if there are several types of domestic violence, this paper basically focused on emotional, physical and sexual violence faced by ever married women. The age category of the respondents revealed that majority of the women who have ever married and have experienced domestic violence are between the age of 15-49. Women who are residing in rural areas are highly committed with domestic violence than those residing in urban areas and accordingly the descriptive result confirmed that 36.6% of the women who are residing in rural areas have experienced domestic violence at some point in time. On the other way traditional religion followers are not committed with domestic violence as per our result. Out of the surveyed women, 44.2% of those living with husband/partner highly experienced domestic violence. Similarly, mothers who are categorized in poorest wealth category take large proportion of committing domestic violence. On the other way, mothers who are living with husband/partner highly experienced domestic violence (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Characteristics of women across the domestic violence

Variables	Items	Experienced domestic violence	
		No. of household	Percent
Age in 5-year groups	15-19	102	35.3
	20-24	219	32.7
	25-29	333	33.9
	30-39	577	35.1
	40-49	333	37.5
place of residence	Rural	296	36.6
	Urban	1275	34.8
Religion	Orthodox	649	35.2
	Catholic	38	67.9
	Protestant	257	32.7
	Muslin	621	35.3
	Traditional	0	0.0
	Other	6	46.2
Current marital status	Never in union	1049	34.7
	Married	436	36.1
	Living with partner	19	44.2
	Widowed	0	0.0
	Divorced	54	36.0
	No longer living together/separated	13	32.5
Wealth index combined	Poorest	391	38.3
	Poorer	192	36.1
	Middle	191	32.9
	Richer	208	34.3
	Richest	589	34.1
Currently residing with husband/partner	Living with her	1319	34.4
	Staying elsewhere	198	41.4

Source: Computed from EDHS, 2016

Domestic violence against women is a major obstacles on the progress of achieving development goals and targets. This domestic violence against women includes emotional violence, physical violence and sexual violence and are supposed to be resulted from the pressure put on women by their

respective husbands and/or intimate partners. When we see domestic violence by types, the result depicted that 24%, 24.9% and 11.1% of women who have ever married have experienced emotional violence, physical violence and sexual violence, respectively from their husband/partner (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Percentage of women across types of violence

Type of violence	Item	No. of household	Percent
Emotional violence	Yes	1074	24.0
	No	3395	76.0
Physical violence	Yes	1115	24.9
	No	3354	75.1
Sexual violence	Yes	498	11.1
	No	3971	88.9

Source: Computed from EDHS, 2016



The status of the domestic violence is different from region to region. The study explored percentages of women who have ever married and experienced domestic violence across the regions. Accordingly, women residing in Oromiya region take large proportion of experiencing domestic violence where as those residing in Afar region share small proportion. The result of cross tabulation reveals that 39.3% of women residing in Oromiya region have

experienced domestic violence from their husband/partner whereas only 20.9% of those from Afar region have experienced domestic violence from their husband/partner. The result of the study further generalized that 35.2% of women who have ever married have experienced domestic violence (emotional, physical or sexual violence) from their husband/partner (Table 3).

**Table 3:** Cross tabulation of region versus domestic violence

Region	Domestic violence			
	Yes		No	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Tigray	116	36.5	202	63.5
Afar	9	20.9	34	79.1
Amhara	402	37.1	683	62.9
Oromiya	685	39.2	1062	60.8
Somali	12	9.4	116	90.6
Benishangul	12	30.8	27	69.2
SNNP	282	30.5	644	69.5
Gambela	5	38.5	8	61.5
Harari	3	33.3	6	66.7
Addis Ababa	38	27.3	101	72.7
Dire Dawa	7	31.8	15	68.2
Overall	1575	35.2	2898	64.8

Source: Computed from EDHS, 2016

**Inferential Results:** As highlighted in the methodology part, binary logistic model was used to detect influencing factors of domestic violence against ever married women in Ethiopia. The Wald statistic as indicated by statistically significant P-value ( $P < 0.000$ ) indicates that the model has strong explanatory power to predict the probability of domestic violence against women from their husband/partner. The coefficients and odds ratio of the logistic model are given in Table 4 and possible discussion and interpretations of these variables are as follows. Region is one of the significant variables influenced domestic violence against women. The result of odd ratio confirmed that women who have ever married and residing in Somali region were 2.3 times less likely to experience domestic violence than those living in Dire Dawa region. Religion is among the significant variables which influenced the domestic violence and result of the odd ratio revealed that ever married women of catholic religion followers were 2.3 times more likely to experience domestic violence from their husband/partner than other religion followers. Wealth index significantly influenced the domestic violence and accordingly,

the result revealed that poorest women were 1.2 times more likely to experience domestic violence than richest women. Women who are currently residing with their husband/partner are less likely to experience domestic violence. The result depicted that women who are currently residing with their husband/partner were 7.5 times less likely to experience domestic violence than those who are not currently living with husband/partner. The implication of this result may be lack of honesty or faithfulness may facilitate conflict between husband and wife if they are living in different places. Husband's or partner's education level is another significant variable influenced domestic violence. The result of the odd ratio depicted that women whose husband/partner completed primary education were 6 times less likely to experience domestic violence than women whose husband/partner had no education. In the same manner women whose husband/partner completed higher education were 6.4 times less likely to experience domestic violence than women whose husband/partner had no education.

**Table 4:** The estimates of coefficients and odds ratio of binary logistic regression

Variables	Items	B	S.E.	Wald	df	P	Exp(B)
<b>Age</b>				4.396	4	0.355	
	15-19	0.004	0.145	0.001	1	0.977	1.004
	20-24	-0.178	0.114	2.449	1	0.118	0.837
	25-29	-0.165	0.101	2.680	1	0.102	0.848
	30-39	-0.069	0.089	0.591	1	0.442	0.934
<b>Region</b>				54.397	10	0.000	
	Tigray	0.180	0.483	0.139	1	0.709	1.197
	Afar	-0.573	0.596	0.924	1	0.336	0.564
	Amhara	0.257	0.467	0.303	1	0.582	1.294
	Oromiya	0.337	0.464	0.528	1	0.467	1.401
	Somali	-1.469	0.552	7.075	1	0.008	0.230
	Benishangul	0.009	0.578	0.000	1	0.988	1.009
	SNNPR	-0.030	0.469	0.004	1	0.949	0.971
	Gambela	0.231	0.746	0.095	1	0.757	1.259
	Harari	0.155	0.846	0.034	1	0.854	1.168
	Addis Ababa	-0.168	0.508	0.110	1	0.741	0.845
<b>Religion</b>				21.337	5	0.001	
	Orthodox	-0.445	0.568	0.614	1	0.433	0.641
	Catholic	0.854	0.635	1.809	1	0.079	2.348
	Protestant	-0.447	0.569	0.618	1	0.432	0.639
	Muslim	-0.485	0.567	0.733	1	0.392	0.616
	Traditional	-20.982	11448	0.000	1	0.999	0.000
<b>Wealth index</b>				8.204	4	0.042	
	Poorest	0.184	0.100	3.394	1	0.065	1.202
	Poorer	0.057	0.113	0.255	1	0.614	1.059
	Middle	-0.141	0.111	1.616	1	0.204	0.869
	Richer	-0.024	0.108	0.051	1	0.822	0.976
<b>Mother's education</b>				2.362	3	0.501	
	Primary	-0.212	0.174	1.493	1	0.222	0.809
	Secondary	-0.145	0.154	0.888	1	0.346	0.865
	Higher	-0.213	0.158	1.813	1	0.178	0.808
<b>Residing with husband/partner</b>	Yes	-0.283	0.101	7.894	1	0.005	0.754
<b>Husband's education</b>				9.905	3	0.019	
	Primary	-0.505	0.163	9.543	1	0.002	0.603
	Secondary	-0.446	0.152	8.623	1	0.003	0.640
	Higher	-0.447	0.164	7.451	1	0.006	0.639
	Constant	0.574	0.760	0.569	1	0.451	1.775

Significance level: 1%, 5% and 10%, N = 4469, Wald statistic = 367.682, P > 0.000

Source: Computed from EDHS, 2016

## Discussion

Women who are residing in rural areas are highly committed with domestic violence than those residing in urban areas and accordingly the descriptive result confirms that 36.6% of the women who are residing in rural areas have experienced domestic violence at some point in time. On the other way, out of the all ever in the present study was carried out on 4469 of ever married women of age 15-49. Even if there are several types of domestic

violence, this paper basically focused on emotional, physical and sexual violence. Married women, 44.2% of those currently living with husband/partner highly experienced domestic violence. Similarly, mothers who are categorized in richest wealth category take large proportion of committing domestic violence. The result of binary logistic model confirmed that region, religion, wealth index, residing with husband/partner or not, husband's/partner's education level significantly influenced domestic violence against women. Region is one of the

significant variables influenced domestic violence in Ethiopia which is in line with [24]. Wealth index significantly influenced the domestic violence and accordingly, the result revealed that poorest women were 1.2 times more likely to experience domestic violence than richest women which coincides with [27]. Women who are currently residing with their husband/partner are less likely to experience domestic violence. The result depicted that women who are currently residing with their husband/partner were 7.5 times less likely to experience domestic violence than those who are not currently living with husband/partner. Husband's or partner's education level is another significant variable influenced domestic violence. The result of the odd ratio depicted that women whose husband/partner completed primary education were 6 times less likely to experience domestic violence than women whose husband/partner had no education. In the same manner women whose husband/partner completed higher education were 6.4 times less likely to experience domestic violence than women whose husband/partner had no education.

### Conclusion and Recommendation

The main focus this study was to assess influencing factors of domestic violence against women from their husband/partner. The study found that more one third (35.2%) of women who have ever married have experienced domestic violence from their husband/partner in Ethiopia. Women who are living in urban areas share large proportion compared to those living in rural areas. The result depicted that experience of domestic violence is higher among older women. Women residing in Oromiya region share higher proportion of experiencing domestic violence whereas those residing in Afar region share lower proportion. The inferential result from binary logistic regression depicted that women in Somali region were less likely to experience domestic violence than those women in Dire Dawa and poorest women were more likely to experience domestic violence than richest women. On the other hand, women who are currently living with their husband/partner were less likely to experience domestic violence than those living in different places. Women whose husband/partner have different level of education level were less likely to experience domestic violence than women whose husband/partner have no education. Therefore, we recommend that critical emphasis should be given by

the government and social workers at different levels in order to eliminate and/or minimize domestic violence against women.

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