

ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACCUSED AND VICTIM CASES ATTENDED IN ONE STOP CRISIS MANAGEMENT CENTER OF CENTRAL NEPAL

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ABSTRACT

Background: Sexual violence is a global public health issue, drawing more concern compared to other forms of violence. Evidence indicates that adolescents face an increased risk of encountering both physical and sexual violence. Despite this, there is a scarcity of nationally representative research on sexual violence in Nepal, hindering the development of informed interventions. This paper seeks to determine the prevalence of sexual violence and relationship between accused and the victim cases attended in one stop crisis management center of central Nepal.

Methods: A retrospective cross-sectional study was carried out in the department of Forensic Medicine of College of Medical Sciences in Bharatpur, Chitwan, Nepal, from January, 2023 to January 2024. Ethical approval was taken from institutional review committee of College of Medical Sciences, Bharatpur, Chitwan. Data was entered and analyzed by using descriptive statistical tools in SPSS-16.

Results: The prevalence of sexual violence was 41.97% (with 95% CI as 36.31% to 47.62%). Out of 123 sexual violence cases majority (40.65%) of them were in the age group less than 14 years followed by 38.21% in the age group 15-18 years. Majority of the victim were female (99.2%) by gender and Janajati (52.8%) by ethnicity. majority (78.9%) were victim of forcefully sexual intercourse. Most of the accused person (20.3%) were stranger followed by boyfriend (17.9%).

Conclusions: The prevalence of sexual violence is almost half among all type of violence. Majority of the victim were Adolescence girls and they were from janajati. One out of ten victim had present of body injuries while two out of ten had genital injuries. Most of the accused person were known person (boyfriend, Neighbors, Uncle and cousin). The statistically significant variables were age and gender.

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines "Any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual gratification, unwanted sexual comments/ advances and acts to traffic or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality, using coercion, threats of harm, or physical force, by any person regardless of relationship to the victim in any setting, including but not limited to home and work."¹ Violence occurs when the victim is compelled, either through threats or the use of force, to engage in, endure, or witness unwanted sexual intercourse. Instances of this can manifest as inappropriate touching, exposure to pornography and refusal by the partner to use condoms, coerced sex during various stages of relationships such as dating, engagement, or marriage, and the display of disrespectful attitudes and obscene gestures in interactions with women.² Sexual violence include various situations such as rape, marital infidelity, sexual assault by strangers, abuse of a sexual or physical nature involving individuals with disabilities, child sexual abuse, forced marriage, child marriage, the obstruction of the right to use contraceptives, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, and compelled abortions.³⁻⁶ On a global scale,

approximately 35.6% of women have encountered Sexual Violence (SV), and prevalence estimates exhibit significant variations.⁷ Perpetrators of sexual violence can be strangers, acquaintances, or even individuals within close relationships, and the consequences extend far beyond the immediate incident, infiltrating victims' lives with lasting psychological scars.⁸ Women commonly encounter various serious forms of violence, including sexual abuse, forced prostitution, selective abortion, and the neglect of girls. Among these, sexual violence stands out as the most prevalent form. Perpetrators of such violence can include spouses, partners, parents, other family members, neighbors, and men in positions of power or control. While some women may not endure arbitrary sexual violence throughout their lives, others face repeated incidents over the span of years or even decades. Notably, sexual violence often emerges as the most degrading manifestation of gender-based violence that women are prone to experience.⁹

The aim of this study was to find the sexual violence and to find the relationship between accused and victim case in Chitwan district.

METHODS

A retrospective cross-sectional study was carried out in the department of Forensic Medicine of College of Medical Sciences in Bharatpur, Chitwan, Nepal, from January, 2023 to January 2024. Ethical approval was taken from institutional review committee of College of Medical Sciences, Bharatpur, Chitwan (Ref No. COMSTH-IRC/2024-003) and administrative approval for data collection was taken from Bharatpur Hospital. Data was collect from one stop crisis management center (OCMC) of Bharatpur hospital, Chitwan, Nepal. Data covering the last twelve months (January, 2023 to January 2024) were extracted from the record file of OCMC of Bharatpur Hospital. A study by Puri et al., showed the prevalence of sexual violence as 46%.¹⁰ Considering this as a prevalence with 95% confidence interval and 9% margin of error, sample size was calculated by using this formula $Z^2pq/e^2=1.96^2*0.46*0.54/(0.09*0.09)=118$. However, the research was conducted among 123 sexual violence cases. The total number of registered violence cases during this period was 293 among than 123 cases were related to sexual violence. Data was collected by using pre define questionnaire. Collected data was check for completeness and then entered and analyzed by using SPSS-16. Data was analyzed by using descriptive statistical tolls. In the descriptive statistics for categorical variable frequency and percentage were calculated while for continuous variable mean and standard deviation were calculated.

RESULTS

Among the total 293 violence cases attended in the last twelve month in one stop crisis management center of Bharatpur Hospital Chitwan, Nepal. The prevalence of sexual violence was 41.97% (with 95% CI as 36.31% to 47.62%) (Table 1).

Table 1: Prevalence of sexual violence (n=293)

| Total violence | Frequency (%) | 95% CI | |
|-----------------|---------------|--------|-------|
| | | Lower | Upper |
| Sexual violence | 123 (41.97) | 36.31 | 47.62 |
| Others violence | 170 (58.03) | | |

Out of 123 sexual violence cases majority (40.65%) of them were in the age group less than 14years followed by 38.21% in the age group 15-18 years. The mean \pm standard deviation of age was 16.88 ± 8.89 years. In the gender, majority of the victim were female (99.2%) by gender. Majority of the victim were Janajati (52.8%) by ethnicity followed by Dalit (21.1%) and Brahmin/Chettri (21.9%) (Table 2).

Regarding the information related to the violence, majority (78.9%) were victim of forcefully sexual intercourse and 21.1% were victim of Indecent assault. Regarding the object penetration, most of the respondents (67.47%) were penile and least were penis (1.6%). Also, 11.4% respondents had present with body injuries while genital injuries were present in 23.6% cases (Table 3).

Table 2: Demographic information of sexual violence victim (n=123)

| Age (years) | Frequency (%) |
|------------------|------------------|
| <10 | 50 (40.7) |
| 11-17 | 47 (38.2) |
| >18 | 26 (21.1) |
| Mean \pm SD | 16.88 \pm 8.89 |
| Gender | |
| Female | 122 (99.2) |
| Male | 1 (0.8) |
| Ethnicity | |
| Brahmin/Chettri | 27 (21.9) |
| Dalit | 26 (21.1) |
| Janjati | 65 (52.8) |
| Madhesi | 3 (2.4) |
| Muslim | 2 (1.6) |

Table 3: Information related to violence

| Types of violence | Frequency (%) |
|------------------------------|---------------|
| Forcefull sexual intercourse | 97(78.9) |
| Indecent assault | 26 (21.1) |
| Object penetration | |
| Penile | 83 67.47) |
| Penile and Digital | 9 (7.3) |
| Digital | 4 (3.3) |
| NA | 27 (22) |
| Body injuries | |
| Absent | 109 (88.6) |
| Present | 14 (11.4) |
| Genital injuries | |
| Absent | 69 (56.1) |
| Present | 29 (23.6) |
| NA | 25 (20.3) |

Regarding the relationship between accused and the victim. Most of the accused person (20.3%) were stranger followed by boyfriend (17.9%) also, 12.2% were Neighbors, 8.9% were from uncle and least 2.4% from cousin (Table 4).

Table 4: Relationship between the accused and the victim

| Relationship | Frequency (%) |
|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Boyfriend | 22 (17.9) |
| Stranger | 25 (20.3) |
| Neighbors | 15 (12.2) |
| Uncle | 11 (8.9) |
| Friend | 8 (6.5) |
| Acquaintance | 7 (5.7) |
| Teacher | 6 (4.9) |
| Brother in law | 4 (3.3) |
| Father | 4 (3.3) |
| Husband | 4 (3.3) |
| Maternal Uncle | 4 (3.3) |
| Cousin | 3 (2.4) |
| Others (Brother, grandfather) | 10 (8.1) |

Table 5: Association of victim with accused and sociodemographic variable

| Sociodemographic Variables | Relations of victim with accused | | Chi-square | p-value |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------|------------|---------|
| | Stranger | Known person | | |
| Age (years) | | | | |
| <10 | 11(22) | 39(79) | 4.67 | 0.042 |
| 10--17 | 8(17) | 39(83) | | |
| >18 | 6(23.1) | 20(76.9) | | |
| Gender | | | | |
| Female | 24(19.7) | 98(80.3) | 3.96 | 0.047 |
| Male | 1(100) | | | |
| Types of violence | | | | |
| Forcefully Sexual intercourse | 20(20.6) | 77(79.4) | 0.024 | 867 |
| Indecent assault | 5(19.2) | 21(80.8) | | |
| Genital injuries | | | | |
| Absent | 15(21.7) | 54(78.3) | 0.257 | 0.0879 |
| Present | 5(20.3) | 24(82.8) | | |
| NA | 5(20) | 20(80) | | |
| Body injuries | | | | |
| Absent | 23(21.1) | 86(78.9) | 0.35 | 0.355 |
| Present | 2(14.3) | 12(85.7) | | |

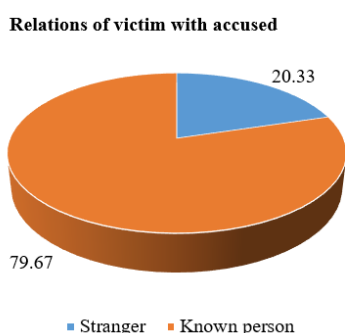


Figure 1: Relations of victim with accused

Above pie chart shows the relation of victim with accused people. This shows that most (79.76%) of the violence was by known person.

Table 5 shows the association of victim with accused and sociodemographic variable. The statistically significant variables associated with sexual violence were age (χ^2 -value=4.67, p-value=0.042) and gender (χ^2 -value=3.96, p-value=0.047).

DISCUSSION

This research showed the prevalence of sexual violence was 41.97% (with 95% CI as 36.31% to 47.62%) while the study conducted by Puri et al., showed the prevalence of sexual violence as 46%.¹⁰ Also, Pandey et al., showed the prevalence of sexual violence was 11.65%.¹¹ Studies conducted in developing countries indicate that the prevalence of coerced sexual violence ranges from 2% to 48%.¹² According to the 2019 systematic review conducted by Araujo JO et al., the prevalence of Sexual Violence (SV) among refugees globally displayed considerable variability, ranging from 0% to 99.8%. In Africa, reported prevalence rates ranged from 1.3% to 99.8%, in Asia,

the figures varied from 0% to 84.6%, and in America and Europe, the reported rates were 3.5% and 3.3%, respectively.¹³ Similarly, the prevalence of sexual prevalence was 9.8% in Thailand, 31.5% in the Maldives, 34.3% in Indonesia, 41.1% in Timor-Leste, and 62.5% in Bangladesh.¹⁴

Among sexual violence cases majority (40.65%) of them were in the age group less than 14 years followed by 38.21% in the age group 15-18 years. The mean \pm standard deviation of age was 16.88 ± 8.89 years. A study conducted at BJGMC and SGH Pune, spanning from November 2015 to September 2017, revealed that the age of the accused individuals ranged from a minimum of 11 years to a maximum of 55 years.¹⁵ Regarding age, the majority of the accused individuals were identified to be within the age group of 21 to 30 years, constituting 61.80%, followed by the age group of 11 to 20 years at 17.80%.¹ The least incidence was observed among individuals in the age group of 51 to 60 years.¹⁶ The multi-country study conducted by the World Health Organization on domestic violence revealed that a range of 4% to 57% of adolescent women aged 15-19, who had ever been in a relationship, had encountered sexual violence from an intimate partner at some stage.¹⁷ In relation to the characteristics of the alleged perpetrators, the age range discovered in this research corresponds with a survey carried out by the Department of Attention to Persons in Situations of Sexual Violence in Salvador, Bahia. In that survey, the ages of the offenders fell within the range of 20 to 40 years old.¹⁸ Most of the victim cases were female (99.2%) by gender which was very high as the study conducted by Pandey et al., in general population which was 11.95% of male participants and 11.08% of female participants having experienced such violence.¹⁵ These figures slightly exceeded the prevalence of sexual violence in Bhutan, which was reported at 7.1% for both sexes.¹⁹ As per the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, US Department of Veterans Affairs in 2009, an estimated 15 to 25 percent of women and 5 to 15 percent

of men experienced childhood sexual abuse.²⁰ Approximately 29% of women worldwide have experienced sexual violence at some point in their lives.⁹ While in ethnicity (52.8%) victim were Janajati, 21.1% were Dalit. Regarding the information related to the violence, majority (78.9%) were victim of forcefully sexual intercourse and 21.1% were Indecent assault. Regarding the object penetration, most of the respondents (67.47%) were penile and least were penis (1.6%). Also, 11.4% respondents had present of body injuries while genital injuries were present in 23.6% case. In three cases, the ages of the accused individuals were over 50 years. This observation aligns with a study by Shinge S.S. et al., where the majority of the accused were found to be in the age group of 21 to 30 years (58.5%), followed by those in the age group of 31 to 40 years (19.51%), and the age group of 11 to 20 years.¹⁶ Regarding the relationship between accused and the victim. Most of them (20.3%) were stranger followed by boyfriend (17.9%) also, 12.2% were Neighbors, 8.9% were from uncle and least 2.4% from cousin. According to the U.S. Department of Justice 2005 National Crime Victimization Study About 2/3 of rapes were committed by someone known to the victim. 73% of sexual assaults were perpetrated by a non-stranger, 38% of rapists are a friend or acquaintance, 28% are an intimate partner, 7% are relatives.²¹ The known accused in these cases included fathers, stepfathers, husbands, boyfriends, in-laws, maternal and paternal relatives, victims' friends and family friends, neighbors, hostel directors, teachers, drivers, and watchmen, among others. Among them, boyfriends constituted the majority of the accused in 42.2% of cases, followed by neighbors at 12.6%, and maternal relatives at 11.2%.¹¹ The act was committed by strangers in 6.37% of cases.¹⁶ As per the National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, US Department of Veterans Affairs in 2009, an estimated 15 to 25

percent of women and 5 to 15 percent of men experienced childhood sexual abuse. The statistically significant variables associated with sexual violence were age (χ^2 -value=4.67, p-value=0.042) and gender (χ^2 -value=3.96, p-value=0.047). The occurrence of physical attacks was linked to factors such as participants' age, parental supervision, feeling of insecurity at school, and the number of close friends. Individuals who experienced bullying, engaged in multiple sexual relationships, and faced corporal punishment in school were more likely to be involved in physical fights. Similarly, instances of sexual violence were associated with school grade, having supportive parents, involvement in multiple sexual relationships, and experiencing corporal punishment at school.¹¹ The majority of perpetrators are familiar to their victims, with about 30 percent being relatives like brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts, or cousins. Approximately 60 percent of offenders are other acquaintances, such as family friends, babysitters, or neighbors. In around 10 percent of cases, strangers are responsible for child sexual abuse.²⁰

CONCLUSION

The prevalence of sexual violence is almost half among all type of violence. Majority of the victim were Adolescence girls and they were from Janajati. Forcefull sexual intercourse is a most common form of sexual violence in which accused penetrate penile. One out of ten victim had presence of body injuries while two out of ten had genital injuries. Most of the accused person were known person (boyfriend, Neighbors, Uncle and cousin). The statistically significant variables were age and gender.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: None

FINANCIAL DISCLOSURE: None

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