

Violence Against Women in Jordan

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Abstract This study aimed to describe the social and cultural etiology of violence against women in Jordan. A sample of houses was randomly selected from all 12 Governorates in Jordan, resulting in a final sample of 1,854 randomly selected women. ANOVA analysis showed significant differences in violence against women as a result of women's education, $F=4.045$, $\alpha=0.003$, women who work, $F=3.821$, $\alpha=0.001$, espouser to violence $F=17.896$, $\alpha=0.000$, experiencing violence during childhood $F=12.124$, $\alpha=0.000$, and wife's propensity to leave the marital relationship $F=12.124$, $\alpha=0.000$. However, no differences were found in violence against women because of the husband's education, husband's work, or having friends who belief in physical punishment of kids. Findings showed women experienced 45 % or witnessed 55 % violence during their childhood. Almost all 98 % of the sample was subjected to at least one type of violence. Twenty-eight percent of the sample believed a husband has the right to control a woman's behavior and 93 % believed a wife is obliged to obey a husband. After each abusive incidence, women felt insecure, ashamed, frightened, captive and stigmatized.

Keywords Violence · Women · Wife · Jordan

Jordan is a developing country, with a value of 0.678 on the Human Development Index for the year 2011 (UNDP 2011). It covers an area of 88,778 Km², has a population of 5.4 million, with an annual growth rate of 4.2, illiteracy rate 11.5, and a

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fertility rate of 3.7 children per woman. Most of the population (42 %) is younger than the age of 15. Ninety six percent of Jordanian citizens are Muslims while only 4 % are Christians (Department of Statistics (DOS) 2009). Jordanian society is considered a heterogeneous society, where Arabic language is the official language; however, English is widely spoken. Family can be categorized based on religion (Muslim, Christian); region (North, Middle, and South); residence (Urban, Rural, Bedouin, and Refugee camps); national affiliation (Jordanian and Palestinian); family type (nuclear, extended); or family life style (conservative, liberal).

The Jordanian social culture accepts the use of violence with children or women as a kind of discipline, and this acceptance is supported by cultural and social norms. However, hurting the individual, or harming them (physically, sexually or emotionally) is not accepted religiously as Islam urges people to be kind to animals when slaughtering them for food. In the Islamic heritage, a woman went to hell because she imprisoned a cat till it died and did not give it enough food and water to preserve its life. A man was received in Paradise because he gave water to a thirsty dog (Al-Badayneh 2005a, b).

Violence against women in the Jordanian society is widely regarded as a family matter that affects large numbers of children and adults across their life span. It affects the generations to come as a result of its intergenerational transaction property. Jordanian women are victimized physically, psychologically, and sexually by a wide range of behaviors that occur in a variety of cultural and social context (i.e., family, university and workplace). (Al-Badayneh 2005a; Araji and Carlson 2001; Chalk and King 1998; Djabari 1998; Haj-Yahia 1998b, 2002b, 2005; Patterson 2004; Zurayk et al. 1997).

Research on violence against women is considered a complex and multidimensional problem. Violence against women or intimate partner violence (IPV) is social and health problem in all societies and cultures all over the globe

that evolved from a husband's right to discipline his wife through physical means. Historically, culture-was, legally, and by social norms, husbands rights are protected in most societies. However, women's rights movements all over the world, and the increased awareness of women's rights weakened this right. Very little information is known about violence against women in the Arab society (Btoush and Haj-Yahia 2008) as most literature on violence against women is concentrated on the Western societies. This study contributes to the understanding the etiology of violence against women in a developing country like Jordan. The aim of this research is to explore the problem of violence against women in Jordan and to identify personal, social, and cultural factors associated with the problem.

Jordan Family Structure

The Jordanian society is a patriarchal one, whereby men are prescribed power, privilege and control over women and children. The Male has the authority and power over a female as a result of his dominance on material and social resources. While men are considered strong, independent, impassionate and aggressive, women, on the other hand, are considered weak, submissive, passionate and peaceful. The distribution of power in a Jordanian family is hierarchic, were males are superior and women and children are subordinates. It is still true that a husband is considered the ultimate ruler who controls all property and all individuals residing in the household. The law and the social structure require a woman obey her husband (Al-Badayneh 2005a, 2006; Araj and Carlson 2001; Haj-Yahia 1998a, 2002b).

A Jordanian family is the nucleus out of which its function is derived (transformational stage), retaining its reputation as top priority, at all times. This priority is reflected by various spheres such as commitment, needs, aspirations, and social relationships (Haj-Yahia 1995, 2000b). The transformation of the extended family in relation to its nucleus has affected the patriarchal structure, the status of men and woman in the family, and the distribution of power within the family by weakening the husband's position in the extended family, including his control over married males' family members and the family members living at home. However, the nuclear family has maintained a patriarchal hierarchical structure, where the husband is still at the top of the power pyramid (Al-Badayneh 1995; Haj-Yahia 2002a).

Family Control

Violence against women in the Arab society, in general, can be seen as practicing the masculine power to achieve power and control over the wife (or any family members) or a

method of family (wife) discipline. From the early moment of birth, the son is taught the masculine roles and role expectations (i.e., to maintain family's honor, stability, and reputation). The first son is usually referred to his father as "father of the first son's first name". When the father dies, the eldest son is expected to take responsibility of the entire family (Abu-Hilal and Aal-Hussain 1997; El Saadawi 1993; Najjar 1994). Females are taught to be polite, passive, and docile. Husbands assume the role of financial provider and is considered to be the "master of the family", whereas wives assume the role of the caregiver taking the responsibilities of child bearing and home making.

Men strictly regulate females' behavior and sexuality and men are responsible for imposing control to protect the family's dignity and reputation (Bates and Rassam 2001). The patriarchal structure and lifestyle of the Jordanian family is also affected by major social values such as mutual support, mutual responsibility, family cohesion and solidarity, harmony among family members, and family privacy. Therefore, the family is expected to provide support and security at times of personal, spousal, family, and social distress. It is part of its collective identity, identification and responsibility; the pride for all and shame on all. Men enjoy greater power, privilege, and control of women and children and consequently have the right to punish them for misbehavior (Al-Badayneh 2005a, b, 2006; Haj-Yahia 2000a; Shalhoub-Kevorkian 1997).

Man's control is not restricted to woman and children but also extends to their social and financial resources since a man is responsible for providing financial support to his wife in exchange for her fidelity and her domestic services. The control of a wife is not only a control of power and sex but also a control of finance (Al-Badayneh 2005a). The honor of a man is measured by the devotion of his wife. Restoring the honor of the family, once the wife deviates from the ethical and social norms, is not the responsibility of the husband only, but the responsibility of family and tribe. Men have the authority to make all decisions. Because of the severe social stigma to these kinds of crimes, the social reaction to them is very severe and ends up in retaliation and sometimes the killing of the female (the victim) (Kulwicki 2002). However, the size of this type of crime reaches an average of 25 cases per year for the period (1990–2008) compared to 25 % of the homicides in the U.S.A. concerning husband–wife killing (U.S. Department of Justice 1995).

Gender Roles

The Jordanian society has conservative attitudes toward gender roles within the social culture, the behavior of men and women is strictly defined and formed on the basics of

social system (Al-Krenawi and Graham 1998). Success (pride) or failure (shame) of one family member is not a personal matter; it concerns the family as a whole. Thus, every family member assumes responsibility in most cases for the behavior, needs, and living conditions of the others (Haj-Yahia 1995). Btoush and Haj-Yahia's study (2008) found a strong tendency to consider violence against women a personal and familial issue rather than a social and legal problem. Dissemination of the family violence and violence against women information to the local community and to the relatives and friends stigmatized family members, damages family reputation, unity, and dignity.

The commitment to provide family members with assistance also derives from the belief that most family problems are internal family matters and that outside parties should not be involved. This approach is all the more applicable when the family encounters problems that may harm its reputation or honor, or in situations that may cause shame, such as cases of violence against women (Al-Badayneh 2005a; Haj-Yahia 2000a, d).

A woman is expected to fulfill her feminist roles, including her loyalty to her husband and the family, and the preservation of the reputation of the family. Social rewards and palatines are attached with role expectations, for instance, if the wife fails to preserve the reputation of her family, physical and cultural punishment is expected (i.e., honor crimes). An Abused woman cannot request divorce, because she will be socially ostracized and accused of being rebellious and not caring about her family and children. One major consequences of such behavior is being socially not accepted and stigmatized by other families. To avoid such consequences, women have to comply with social and cultural rules. Males are respected in the family. A Woman is responsible for her husband and her family (Al-Badayneh 2009, 2005a, b; Dobash and Dobash 1992).

Literature Review

Btoush & Haj-Yahia's study (2008) pointed out to three major findings: (I) there was high awareness of violence against women and the different types of abuse (mainly physical and psychological), (II) a general tendency to oppose violence against women, and (III) a tendency to blame the victim for abuse, and a lesser tendency to blame the abuse on the husband, marital problems, as well as familial and societal conditions.

Researchers have reported rates of physical violence against Arab women ranging from (26 %) to (87 %) (Al-Nsour et al. 2009; Ammar 2000; Diop-Sidibe et al. 2005; El-Zanaty et al. 1996; Haj-Yahia 1999, 2000c; Maziak and Asfar 2003; Al-Badayneh 2004, 2005b). Violence against women in the Jordan is perceived as a family matter. (Al-

Badayneh 2005a; Araji and Carlson 2001; Djabari 1998; Haj-Yahia 1998b, 2002b, 2005; Patterson 2004; Zurayk et al. 1997).

Al-Badayneh and Al-Shgour (2009) revealed that 90.2 % of university students indicated they witnessed, heard, or read something about child abuse. Moreover, 75.3 % of the sample was exposed to physical abuse during their childhood. Moreover, family abuse has been reported in 87 % of the cases. Okour and Hijazi (2009) found that university students was significantly affected by witnessing and exposure to domestic violence. Students ranked first the family as institution that contributed to acquiring violent behavior. Similar findings were found in a study conducted by Al-Aamiry (1994) on a group of university students who revealed that 86 % of them reported experiencing at least one type of family violence. The most prevailing abuse types in their families were intimidation 75 %, emotional abuse 40 %, and physical abuse 33 %. About half of the sample indicated their mothers were victims of abuse. Moreover, the father abused everyone, the mother abused children, and the male children abused the female children.

Al-Badayneh and AbuHejleh (2005) examined the relationship of wives satisfaction; all types of violence against wives (physical; psychological; sexual, and injury), and wives personal characteristics in city of Al-Karak. A systematic random sample consisted of 350 wives drawn from 23 blocks out of 184 blocks, with a ratio of 17 families from each block. A special questionnaire was developed as a research tool for this study, which was composed of demographic variables, wives marital satisfaction scale (ENRICH); violence against wives scale (CTS2) and wives exposure to violence. Findings of the study showed a negative significant relationship between marriage satisfaction and violence against wives in general and in all types of violence (physical; psychological; sexual; and injury). Moreover, a relationship was found between marriage satisfaction and each of the following variables: wives exposure to violence; witnessing violence during childhood; father absence, experiencing violence in last 12 months; family disputes and alcohol and drug abuse (Al-Badayneh and AbuHejleh 2005).

The acceptance of violence is not restricted to men; women also accepted and justified violence against them by men. In a study on attitudes of Jordanians women ($N=356$) towards wife hitting, Haj-Yahia's (2002b) found a great percentage of women believed that the violence experienced at the hands of men was justified and beneficial. As a result, women should not seek help from governmental agencies. This can be attributed to the patriarchal system that pervades in the Jordanian society. The majority of Jordanian men agreed or strongly agreed that wife beating is justified under certain circumstances. The majority of men blamed women for the violence against them and believed that women

benefit from beating. Very few Jordanian men believed that husbands should be held responsible for their violent behaviors toward their wives (Haj-Yahia 2005). In a study by Araji and Carlson (2001) on Jordanian university students, it was reported that a father's occupational status and a mother's education significantly influenced the students' perception of family violence. Eight of the subjects indicated that physical abuse against wives was not a problem; however, 21 % of the same sample indicated that physical abuse against wives is something of a problem (Araji and Carlson 2001). Haj-Yahia and Edleson's (1994) study of physical or emotional abuse of Arab men toward their fiancés, found that over 50 % of the sample ($N=434$) had engaged in physical or/and emotional abuse toward their future wives.

Khawaja et al. (2008) explored the factors associated with the acceptance of wife beating among men and women in twelve Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan. Findings showed the majority of men (60.1 %) and women (61.8 %) believe that wife beating is justified in at least one of the eight hypothetical marital situations presented to them. Among women, those who had been victims of intimate partner violence are significantly more likely to report acceptance of wife beating. Among men, acceptance of wife beating is also significantly associated with their current age, labor force participation, their view on women's autonomy, and their own history as perpetrators of IPV.

Acceptance of wife beating by both men and women was strongly associated with previous experiences of wife beating adjusting for other risk factors. In a study of the refugee camps in Jordan, Khawaja (2004) 60 % to 62 % of men and women justified violence against women in situations as talking back toward the husband, deliberately disobeying the husband, behaving in a way a husband dislikes at home or in public, not carrying out household chores properly, going out in public unaccompanied, not respecting the husband's family, or not caring for the children properly. Similarly, in a study of Syrian women, violence against women was associated with women's educational level, religion, residence, smoking, and mental distress (Maziak and Asfar 2003). In a qualitative study, Oweis et al. (2009) showed that despite women's anguish, women justified, normalized, and tolerated abuse.

The importance of this study lies in its comprehensiveness in terms of a large sample, geographic coverage of participants and macro demographic distribution, and all types of violence being studied. This study can be used as a reference point for the evaluating future achievement of any violence awareness campaign against women. Most previous research was conducted on small size samples, and on homogeneous groups.

Method

Data Collection and Procedures

A random sample of 1,854 married women was selected randomly from 12 Governorates.

Data was collected in late 2006 through face-to-face interviews carried out by local staff consisting of eight researchers and one field supervisor specifically trained on the data collection process prior to the data collection stage. The response rate was 96.5 %. A random sample of 16 blocks was selected from each Governorate with the help of the Jordan Census Department. A list of ten random houses from each block was generated using Microsoft Excel®. A sheet with all census and geographic information was given to the researchers. In the pre-administration phase, researchers tested the instrument on a sample of 10 cases to ensure clarity of questions and understanding of meanings. A final sample of 1,854 wives was selected randomly. The team started distributing questionnaires in the Northern region. A pre-approved time schedule by the principle researcher was given to the field supervisor, including the directions and the number of houses in each track. The field supervisor was in charge of administrating the team. All respondents were informed of the objectives of the study, and informed consent was verbally obtained prior to the interview.

Instrument

A questionnaire was developed based on literature review. The instrument consisted of items that measured these dimensions: I) Socio-demographic data: The first part of the questionnaire included questions about the wife's socio-demographic profile: age, gender, education, age of wife at marriage, age of husband at marriage, marriage age, family size, marital status, job, and place of residence. II) Culture aspects of violence: The first part of the questionnaire also covered cultural aspects of family violence (i.e., we have friends/relatives who believe in physical punishment as a method of discipline; when I was a kid I was exposed to family violence; or when I was a kid I witnessed family violence incidents). III) Beliefs towards violence: The first part consists of seven questions (i.e., Do you believe that all family members should fear the husband? Do you believe that husband's obedience by his wife or all family members is obligatory? Is it the husband's right to punish his wife or any family member when they commit serious mistakes?) IV) Family situation: This section consists of five items regarding wives satisfaction, family conflicts, wives commitment to marriage, wives propensity to leave, and attribution of leaving.

Measures of Violence Against Women

Violence against women (VAW) is measured based on several measures of violence including Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS2), the most widely used instrument for identifying family violence. The default reference period of time is the past twelve months. The revised Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS2) by Murray A. Straus, Sherry L. Hamby, Sue Boney-McCoy, and David B. Sugarman (1996) was modified and adapted to the Jordanian society. The published internal consistency reliabilities of the CTS2 scales have ranged from $\alpha=.79$ to $\alpha=.95$. There is also evidence of construct validity and discriminate validity for the CTS2.

The CTS2 includes 39 items within five types of violence subscales: Negotiation, Psychological Aggression, Physical Assault, Sexual Coercion and Injury Inflicted, all of which are scored on a 0–6 (0 = never happened to 6 = more than twenty times in the past year) Likert-type scale. The CTS2 may be scored in two ways: (I) a prevalence score for each subscale indicates whether or not that type and level of violence occurred within the past year, and (II) a chronicity score indicates the frequency of occurrence of that type and level of violence over the past year.

Other measures of violence against women including violence against wives (VAW), was measured by asking the question in the last (12) months did you expose to any of the violent behaviors in a list by your husband. Women were asked whether they were exposed to any kind of violence during their childhood. Women post violence feelings was measured by asking about their feelings after each abuse incident occurred to them (i.e., I feel insecure in my house, I feel shame of the things he did to me, I feel afraid of my husband). The women responses to violence subscale consists of nine items regarding the violent situation (i.e., Did you ask for help (in general or for medical, police, lawyer, or social help ...etc.). The women's definition of violence subscale consists from many violent behaviors covering all types of abuses. Seriousness of violence subscale consists from eight types of traditional abuses (physical, psychological, sexual, emotional abuse, and financial, education, and health neglect). Women realization of prevalence of violence consists of four items (general violence prevalence, family violence as a social problem, family violence prevalence in the community, and in the family). Finally, women reporting violence consists of eight items measuring why women did not report violence?

Results

Validity and Reliability

Construct validity is used to estimate the validity of the scale. Theoretically, woman satisfaction with her marriage will be

negatively correlated with violence against woman. A correlation of (-0.129 , $\alpha=0.000$) was found between woman satisfaction and the total CTS2 scale (husband). Correlation between woman satisfaction and psychological aggression (0.152 , $\alpha=0.000$), physical assault, (0.131 , $\alpha=0.000$), sexual coercion, (0.116 , $\alpha=0.000$), and injury (0.079 , $\alpha=0.001$).

A Cronbach's Alpha was computed for CTS2 scale, and it was 0.93 for the both sides, 0.89 for women, and 0.87 for husband side. Correlation between total scale and negotiation, (0.225 , $\alpha=0.000$), psychological aggression (0.759 , $\alpha=0.000$), physical assault, (0.815 , $\alpha=0.000$), sexual coercion, (0.713 , $\alpha=0.000$), and injury (0.595 , $\alpha=0.000$).

Socio-demographic Characteristics

There were 287 (15 %) of the women from northern region, more than half 81 % of the sample were from the Middle region, and 68 (4 %) from southern region (where the capital city Amman with population of around half of the country. Nine hundred sixty-eight (53 %) were unemployed, and 453 or 24 % were working in administrative jobs. Almost all participants 1,821 or 98 % were married, and educated (1,769 or 95 %), only 85 (5 %) of them were illiterate.

Family Situation

Less than half of the sample (43 %) of the participants indicated they had a family disputes and 94 % reported family conflict. Despite the presence of disputes and conflicts, 96 % of women were committed to their families, and 89 % were satisfied. Findings showed more than half (57 %) of the sample reported they have friends who believe in using physical punishment as a way of discipline. On the micro level, violence against woman is prevailed in Jordanian family, as 98 % of the sample reported exposure to some kind of violence against women or witnessing family violence. Also, family violence is prevailed in the community, in general, 96 %.

Moreover, around half of the sample (45 %) was exposed to the family violence and 55 % of the study subjects witnessed a type of family violence during their childhood. With gender inequality, and exclusion, and unjust distribution of power and control in the family, more than half of the sample (68 %) reported that both husband and wife take joint decisions. Around one-third of the sample (29 %) reported that the husband who takes family decisions alone. While only 3 % of wives make decisions alone. Only 1 % of the sample participated in family decision. A quarter of the sample reported experiencing the absence of father during their childhood. In regards to the family economic decisions, 68 % of sample reported that husband and wife were taking decisions together, while 29 % of husbands alone taking the decisions. Financial dependence of the wife on her husband contributes to the situation of conjugal violence.

Distribution of Power and Control

Current findings showed women have cultural beliefs that make them accept violence and internalize it. One of the masculine's characters is the right to punish any family member or wife if proven guilty (if he/she commits misbehavior) (72 %, 50 % respectively). Women believed in obedience to the husband (93 %) and his control (28 %) of all family members. Around half of the sample (48 %) believed that the husband has the right to punish his wife, and 9 % of wives believed the husband has the right to use violence during family dispute.

As seen from Table 1, wives internalize cultural beliefs that justify violence against women and later on blame themselves for being abused. This finding is consistent with Haarr's (2007) findings that most wives approved and accept wife beating and abuse by husband (Haj-Yahia 2003).

Women's Definition of Violence

Women believe that violence is composed of several dimensions: physical, psychological, emotional, sexual, financial, health, educational, individual human rights neglect, and economic violence and neglect. All types of violence against women were considered serious with an average around 2 on a scale of 4 (where 4 = very serious and 0 = not serious). Jordanian women viewed the meaning of violence against women as consisting of eight components: physical, sexual, emotional, social, and economic abuse, sexual desertion (a husband's leaving the woman's bed and sleeping in a separate room), marrying another woman, and bequeath (Merath) neglect (Gharaibeh and Al-Ma'aitah (2002)). About 50 % of women believed that men have the right to physically hurt and sexually desert a rebellious wife.

Violence Prevalence, Post Violence Against Women's Feelings and Beliefs

Table 2 presents wife's feelings and beliefs after being abused. Wives suffer many severe negative feelings following each violent incident by her husband Such as insecurity

80 %, shame 81 %, fear 86 %, control 86 %, and feeling like they are in Jail 81 %. These feelings are part of social acceptance violence and inequality in gender roles, and social conformity. 87 % of women believe they were helpless, 88 % felt they can't escape their violent situation, and 92 % believed they can't leave the family and 92 %.

Women's Reaction to Husband's Violence

Women's reaction to the violence was passive. Even a high percent of them reported trying to call for help (81 %) and most of this help came from her family of origin. Women did not ask for help to avoid disclosure of her private life and to avoid the negative consequences of social stigma. When things get out of control, the wife's family of origin usually sues the wife's husband (86 %), but very small portion of the sample tried to call a police (2.5 %) or a lawyer (2 %). Women consider family violence a personal issue. Only 32 %, of women were willing to report family violence. Protection is offered by the family of origin, since the victim (wife) needs to continue to fulfill her roles as a wife, mother, sister, or daughter. An abused woman is characterized by negative self image, "she deserved it", taking the blame for an abuser's actions, guilt, anger, inability to protect herself, and physical pain (Walker 1979).

As shown in Table 3, lack of awareness is the main factor for not reporting family violence. Justifications for not reporting violence against women can be attributed to insufficient information, people not being sure what to do, fear, not wanting to interfere in others business, and lack of government help.

Women's Attribution of Causes of Violence Against Women

Women attribute violence against women to the drug abuse (62 %) or alcohol abuse (585) and social strains (i.e. divorce or death) as a major cause for family violence. Around half of the sample attributes violence to causes such as prevalence of violence in society, history of family violence, violent disciplines (See Table 4).

Table 1 Women's beliefs in cultural acceptance of wife abuse

Variable	#	%
Belief in husband's right to use violence in dispute	171	9
Belief in fear from husband by all family members	416	22
Belief in husband's right to control all family members	515	28
Belief in obedience to husband by all family members	1650	89
Belief that each family member has a role to play	1727	93
Belief in husband's use of punish his wife when proven guilty	922	50
Belief in husband's use of punish any member in the family	1337	72

Table 2 Women's feelings after each husband violent incident

Variable	#	%
1. I feel insecure in my home	1481	80
2. I feel shame from the things he did to me	1500	81
3. I am afraid of him	1592	86
4. I feel I am programmed toward him	1594	86
5. I feel as if I am in prison	1496	81
6. I feel I am not controlling my life	1574	85
7. I cover being abused, I am afraid to reveal it to others	1543	83
8. I feel he owned me and controlled by him	1550	84
9. I feel he can fear me without even touching me	1543	83
10. I feel he has fearful stare	1516	82

ANOVA analysis showed significant differences in violence against women as a result of the women's education $F=4.045$, $\alpha=0.003$, women's work $F=3.821$, $\alpha=0.001$, exposure to violence $F=17.896$, $\alpha=0.000$, witnessing family violence $F=12.124$, $\alpha=0.000$, and wife propensity to leave the relationship $F=12.124$, $\alpha=0.000$. However, no difference was found in violence against women as a result of the husband's education $F=1.95$, $\alpha=0.100$, and husband work $F=1.294$, $\alpha=0.257$,

ANOVA Analysis for the Differences in violence against women attributed to education, work, friends who belief in physical discipline, exposure to violence, witness a family violence, and wife propensity to leave (See Table 5).

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to provide knowledge on a macro national level on violence against women in Jordan. A lot of speculations were made regarding the size and the etiology of the violence against women in Jordan. Most previous studies were conducted on a small sample size, conducted in Amman (the capital city) and from

Table 3 Women justification for NOT reporting violence against wife

Variable	#	%
1. Insufficient information	1164	63
2. Not sure what to do	1270	69
3. Fear from other people's reaction	1189	64
4. Desire not to interfere in Others' business	1281	69
5. Fear to complicate the situation	1189	64
6. Reporting will not work	1292	70
7. Government bodies do not help	1148	62
8. The situation is a separate incident	1210	65

nursing perspectives. Findings emerging from this study revealed many important facts.

The Prevalence of the Problem

Findings of this research showed that the size of the problem has exceeded the alarming signs and it is much larger than was expected as almost all women experienced at least one type of violence in the last twelve months. Violence against women is prevailing among all men social status, regardless of their education or socio-economic levels. Violence against women is a transferable phenomenon, from family to formal and informal social institutions such as school, university, and workplace and to the wide society. The large size of violence against women can be attributed to men and women's acceptance of violence against women. Some women even believed that physical violence by men against them was justified and beneficial (Haj-Yahia 2000d). Eight percent of educated people, like university students, indicated that physical abuse against women was not a problem (Araji and Carlson 2001; Khawaja 2004; Khawaja et al. 2008). This is consistent with most relevant literature, for example Oweis et al. (2009) which showed that regardless of women's suffering; women justified, normalized, and accepted violence against them.

Gender Roles

Findings showed violence against women is part of the gender roles. Women who reported conflicts, disputes and abuse were, at the same time, satisfied and committed to their families and had no intention of leaving the abusive relationship. This situation is consistent with gender roles and status expectations within the Jordanian social system; in order to avoid such consequences, women have to comply with social and cultural rules that justify violence as part of women discipline and husband authority. Based on the cycle of violence theory, women usually deny their fear and minimize the seriousness of the situation; and they are reluctant to ask for help in order to avoid the feeling of shame and stigma. Following the beating, the wife may be in shock, withdrawn, passive and resist treatment for her injuries. They can preserve their family unity, reputation and their children's best interest as well as their self-image, esteem, and identity (Haj-Yahia 1995, 2000b).

Cultural Acceptance of Violence

Findings showed violence against women is rooted in the social culture. Violence against woman stems from different personal, cultural, and social cycles. On the macro level, cultural acceptance of violence against women is the broadest among factors. On this cycle, violence against women is

Table 4 Wife attribution to the causes of wife abuse

Variable	#	%
1. Drugs or alcohol usage and abuse	1147	62
2. Inability to control violence	1016	55
3. Social strains (i.e., poverty, divorce or death)	1076	58
4. History of family violence	970	52
5. Prevalence of violence in society	1016	55
6. Need to control the behavior of family members	891	48
7. Violent disciplines	925	50
8. Lack of respect in the family	900	49
9. Desire to dominate the family by family member	912	49
10. Family financial problems	889	49
11. Ineffective communication between family members	916	49
12. Family Isolation and lack of social network	899	49

socially and culturally accepted. The presence of widespread cultural and social norms that support violence against women is fostered by cultural and social expectations that support roles of men and women, which generally devalue woman; Violence against women is justified, accepted, normalized by social culture. Women have tolerated violence to avoid social stigma and fear of being generalized and of being divorced and protect their personal and familial reputation. The lack of effective efforts combating violence-against-women stems from perceiving this violence, as a family matter and not a

crime. Formal or informal interference in other family matters (especially concerning women's issues) is strongly rejected and unacceptable (Araji and Carlson 2001; Haj-Yahia 1998b, 2002b, 2005).

Forms of Violence

Based on the findings of this study, two forms of husband (partner) violence exist in Jordanian society, intimate terrorism (IT), rooted in general patterns of power and control (i.e., physical, & sexual violence). This type is embedded in patriarchal culture about gender and the social acceptance of violence against women. The second form is Situational Couple Violence (SCV), which is a response to a situational violence (Leone et al. 2007; Johnson 1995). Women are squeezed and trapped between their families of origin and family of marriage. Family of origin is considered the final destination in case of marital crisis (divorced), and wife support, protection and security. Also the family of origin pressures women to stay in the abusive, unjust and inequitable relationship at their marriage families to maintain their personal and familial reputation, dignity and unity and to avoid bad reputation and generalized social stigma to the total social network. A husband's abuse threatens the honor of the wife's family of origin and her marriage family. A wife tries to protect the survival of her marriage family by blaming herself. It is part of what is known as collective self-esteem (Crocker and Luhtanen 1990).

Table 5 ANOVA Analysis for the Differences in violence against women attributed to demographic and history of violence variables

Variable	Sources of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean of square	F	Sig
Husband's education	Between groups	256.810	4	64.203	1.950	.100
	Within groups	60878.804	1849	32.925		
	Total	61135.614	1853			
Wife's education	Between groups	530.353	4	132.588	4.045	.003
	Within groups	60605.261	1849	32.777		
	Total	61135.614	1853			
Husband's job	Between groups	255.844	6	42.641	10.06	.257
	Within groups	60879.770	1847	32.961		
	Total	61135.614	1853			
Wife's job	Between groups	749.498	6	124.916	3.821	.001
	Within groups	60386.117	1847	32.694		
	Total	61135.614	1853			
Exposure to violence in childhood	Between groups	1724.186	3	574.729	17.96	.000
	Within groups	59411.429	1850	32.141		
	Total	61135.614	1853			
Witness family violence	Between groups	61135.614	1853		12.12	.000
	Within groups	1178.76	3	392.923		
	Total	59956.846	1850	32.409		
Wife propensity to leave	Between groups	1178.769	3	392.923		.000
	Within groups	59956.846	1850	32.409		
	Total	61135.613	1853			

Jordanian women viewed the meaning of violence against women as consistent of eight components: physical, sexual, emotional, social, and economic abuse, sexual desertion (a husband's leaving the woman's bed and sleeping in a separate room), marrying another woman, and bequeath (Merath) neglect. This finding is consistent with findings of Gharaibeh and Al-Ma'aitah (2002). This definition is consistent with literature on other Arab societies (Al-Badayneh 2005a, 2006; Haj-Yahia 2000a, b; Hassan et al. 2004).

Attribution of Violence

Women in this study attributed causes of violence against them to external forces in order to avoid self-blame or husband blame. This kind of sympathy with the abuser can be explained in light of Stockholm Syndrome or what is called (hostage syndrome), as when the wife feels as if she is held a prisoner at her own home. There is a match between the abused woman and the hostage's case, because of the physical and psychological threatening by the husband. Women believe that there is no escape or way out, because husbands completely control the entire situation, and that what the husband presents kindly sometimes is a result of isolating her from the external world, she develops a bond between her and her husband or ostracized by other families (Graham and Rawlings 1991).

The reluctance of women to report violence and ask for help, can be attributed to the following factors: (I) Lack of available services for victims of violence against woman; (II) Negative social stigma attached to the victims of violence against woman; (III) The expected harm to the reputation of woman and families; (IV) The fear from generalized negative stigma to the other family members; (V) Women's belief that nothing will be changed no matter what she did. Asking for help might be considered as a woman rebellion against her husband and family, which might cost her negative familial and social consequences such as divorce (Al-Badayneh 2005a; Haj-Yahia 2000a).

Implications and Applications for Policy Makers and Practice

The findings of this study are applicable to all women in the other Arab countries. On the policy level, women's education and work are the best investments in women empowerment, security at home and within the society at large, and protect women's human rights, and against violence. Educated women will ask for all types of help, as a result of their personal and financial independence.

Victims of violence-against-women who continue to stay in their violent relationships fear of losing face, financial security, children, love, respect, (Choice and Lamke 1997).

Social embarrassment to their families and children, and social stigma are also significant factors for abused women to stay in the abusive relationship.

An integrated strategic plan along with a general health-preventive approach (primary, tertiary and secondary prevention) to combat violence in a society including violence against women is needed. Partnership between governmental and nongovernmental organizations is crucial to avoid repetition of the services and to enhance the quality of services provided to victims of violence including women.

Violence against women in the Jordanian society can be understood in light of social and cultural context of a patriarchal ideology and system, whereas violence against women is one way of maintaining power, control, and dominance of husband over wife. Gender inequality can be partially attributed to the gender status. Husbands are accorded a higher status in the social system, whereas wives are relegated to a lower status. There is a need to break down the taboo that violence is a private matter.

The criminal justice system and health care professionals and practitioners need to enforce laws whenever violence signs and symptoms are seen on women, especially through medical examination. Professional and practitioners need to recognize that illiterate and unemployed women are not in a position to leave the abusive situation because of lack of education and/or financial dependence on the husband. As Gharaibeh and Al-Ma'aitah (2002) mentioned that health care professionals and practitioners need to address these issues when developing protocols, guidelines, tools for screening, and risk assessment (Gharaibeh and Al-Ma'aitah 2002). The findings of this study also indicate the need for further research investigating the role of cultural factors in explaining such a phenomenon, why women stay in an abusive relationship, and how to empower women who are living in violent situation.

Limitations and Future Research Direction

The results of this research were based on a large national sample. However, findings may not be generalized to other populations in Jordan such as Palestinians living in camps in Jordan, rural and Badia areas. Moreover, future research is needed in certain segments of Jordanian society such as rural and Bedouin areas. Other areas that violence against women need to be studied among its members are military and security sectors. On the methodological level, research tools and scales to measure violence against women are needed to be developed to reflect the components of Jordanian culture and social system. A qualitative research is needed too as a methodology especially to study victims of violence against women.

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