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Are the married women living in slums safe and mentally healthy at home? A cross sectional study from Bangalore, India

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Statement of the Problem: Ever married women who reside in informal settlements like slums experience numerous stressors in life, including intimate partner violence (IPV), which affects their mental health globally. So this study was undertaken with the objective of estimating the prevalence of IPV and psychiatric morbidity and factors associated with the same among ever married women aged 18-60 years residing in an urban slum of Bangalore.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: This cross sectional study was conducted in an urban slum in Bengaluru city, India. 300 women selected using systematic random sampling were interviewed using standard data collection tools viz. M.I.N.I screen, M.I.N.I Plus, Index of Spouse Abuse (ISA) and Family interview for Genetic Studies (FIGS).

Findings: The mean (SD) age of the participants was 32.37 (8.78) years. Prevalence of psychiatric morbidity was 30% (CI±5.19). Most common morbidities were depression and generalized anxiety disorders. IPV (adj OR=2.06, p=0.02) was an independent predictor of psychiatric morbidity. Alcohol dependence and having <4 family members were also found to be significantly associated with psychiatric morbidity. The lifetime prevalence of IPV was 67.3% (CI±5.31). Age>25 years (adj OR=6.08, p<0.01) and alcohol dependent spouse (adj OR=58.6, p<0.01) were significantly associated with IPV.

Conclusion & Significance: Intimate partner violence significantly affects mental health of married women. Alcohol dependence among husbands has also been found to be intricately linked with the women's mental health. Similar studies in different settings and follow up studies would enable us to identify other risk factors which could be aimed at in controlling the rising burden of psychiatric morbidity among married women.

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