

WIVES' GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES AND THEIR EXPERIENCE OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE IN CENTRAL PROVINCE, SRI LANKA

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Background Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a global public health problem that has several associations.

Objectives We conducted this study to examine the association between wives' attitudes towards gender roles and their experience of different types of IPV in Central province, Sri Lanka.

Methods We carried out a community-based cross sectional study in Central Province. For this, we included 628 ever married women between 15–49-years-old. Using a validated, structured questionnaire, we collected data on women's experience of physical, psychological, and sexual violence and their attitudes towards gender roles. We used multivariate logistic regression analysis to examine the association between women's attitudes towards gender roles and IPV.

Results Of total (n=628), 36.6% of the wives experienced at least one of physical, psychological and/or sexual violence by their husbands during their life time (ever abuse), and 19.7% experienced such violence during the past 12 months (current abuse). Wives who disagreed that 'a good wife obeys her husband always' were more likely to have experienced ever (AOR=5.94, 95% CI 2.63 to 13.44, p<0.001), and current (AOR=5.10, 95% CI 1.12 to 23.33, p<0.01) isolated psychological violence. Wives who disagreed that 'if a husband mistreats or abuse a wife, outsiders should intervene' were less likely to have experienced current physical, sexual or both abuse by husbands (AOR=0.26, 95% CI 0.10 to 0.67, p<0.01).

Significance In Sri Lanka, wives were less likely to experience IPV by husbands when they respected cultural norms such as 'a good wife obeys her husband.' IPV prevention policies need to be culturally sensitive and socially acceptable for the effective prevention of IPV in the country.