

## ORIGINAL ARTICLE

# Distribution of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) Types and Relationship of IPV Scores with Socio-Demographic Factors among Abused Women in Jordan.

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) among women is a significant public health concern with severe health consequences. This study aims to identify the distribution of IPV types and examine the relationship between socio-demographic factors and IPV scores among abused women in Jordan. **Methods:** A cross-sectional study was conducted between March and September 2023 among 465 abused women at the Family Protection Department in Irbid, Jordan. A questionnaire was administered to collect information such as socio-demographics and IPV. Data was analysed using linear regression and reported in terms of unstandardized coefficients (B) and 95% confidence intervals (CI). **Results:** 30.63% of the participants complained of all forms of IPV, 28.54% single IPV, 27.84% physical and emotional IPV, 3.48% emotional and sexual IPV, and 9.51% unidentified IPV. Women married for over 25 years (B = -2.68; 95% CI: -5.20, -0.16) and those with a diploma (B = -2.90; 95% CI: -4.30, -1.50) or bachelor's degree (B = -2.59; 95% CI: -4.02, -1.16) had lower IPV scores. Nonetheless, women with unemployed husbands (B = 1.70; 95% CI: 0.72, 2.65) reported elevated IPV scores. **Conclusion:** IPV often includes multiple forms, with emotional IPV being the most common among Jordanian women. Implementing educational programs and women's empowerment initiatives can help reduce its occurrence.

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## INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is a public health concern, causing physical, sexual, and psychological harm to women(1). IPV including physical acts, threats, and intimidation, is a significant issue. In 2018, 27% of women aged 15 and older experienced physical or sexual abuse, with 10% occurring in the preceding year, indicating the persistence of this trend (2). In Arab countries, the reported prevalence of IPV varied from 6% to 59% for physical abuse, 3% to 40% for sexual abuse, and 5% to

91% for psychological abuse.(3). Research undertaken in Jordan has identified comparable high rates of IPV to other regional neighbours. Specifically, prevalence rates in Jordan were 25.9% for physical abuse, 13.1% for sexual abuse, and 65.1% for psychological abuse (4). IPV remains a prominent issue in Jordan's local community (5). The occurrence of IPV is believed can be various forms either multiple or single occurrence. Nonetheless, the Jordanian community, like many other Middle Eastern communities, currently lacks significant and comprehensive data on IPV. To our knowledge, no study has examined the comprehensive distribution types of IPV encountered by abused women in Jordan.

The occurrence of IPV was examined in the context of the ecological model. Based on this model, occurrence of IPV is influenced by multiple factors, from individual

characteristics to broader societal influences. Nonetheless, lack of study that investigate IPV distribution and utilize the ecological model to identify its key influencing factors. Therefore, this study aims to identify the distribution of IPV types and examine the relationship between socio-demographic factors and IPV scores among abused women in Jordan.

## METHODS

### Study design, study participants, and sampling procedure

A cross-sectional study was conducted between March and September 2023 among abused women attended at the Family Protection Department (FPD) in Irbid, Jordan. Due to restricted access for researchers to the target population by the FPD, a convenience sample was used. Women with Arabic literacy, aged over 18, currently married, and seeking assistance from the FPD in Irbid due to IPV were included. The study excluded participants under 18 years old, experienced acute and severe abuse, first-time attendees of the FPD, had mental illness, and those with communication difficulties. The sample size was calculated by G-Power, taking into account the following criteria: a power of .80, an alpha of .05, and a relatively modest effect size ( $p = .15$ )(6). The initial sample size was 343. The final sample size was 429, with an extra 25% added to cover any dropouts.

### Study procedure

Data collection was started after obtaining approval from the Research Ethics Committee of Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM/JEPeM/22060457), Jordan University of Science and Technology (Institutional Review Board number: 2023/156/2), and the Ministry of Health in Jordan. (MOH/REC/2023/118). Written informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. Their participation was entirely voluntary; questionnaires were collected back in the same day.

### Research tools

We collected information using a self-reported, paper-printed questionnaire. An Arabic version of Woman Abuse Screening Tool (A-WAST) was employed to assess the occurrence of physical, sexual, and emotional IPV. The A-WAST showed good internal consistency, with values ranging from 0.90 to 0.98, confirming its reliability (7). It has nine items with a 3-point Likert scale range from 'never' (0), 'sometimes' (1) to 'often' (2). The first two items assess whether the participant has experienced IPV. Items 3 to 8 explore specific types of violence, including physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. The final item examines the participant's relationship with their husband's relatives, reflecting the cultural relevance of extended family dynamics in Jordan. Each of the nine items is scored

0, 1, or 2, yielding a total score ranging from 0 to 18, with higher scores indicating greater exposure to IPV. The type of IPV was categorized into eight groups which are all types, unidentified IPV, emotional IPV, physical IPV, and sexual IPV, sexual and emotional IPV, sexual and physical IPV, and emotional and physical IPV. Unidentified IPV refers to participants who experienced IPV, but the specific type was not identified using the WAST instrument. Single-type IPV includes emotional, physical, or sexual IPV experienced in isolation. Sexual and emotional IPV refers to experiencing both forms without physical IPV, while sexual and physical IPV refers to experiencing both types without emotional IPV. All types of IPV indicates that the participant experienced emotional, physical, and sexual IPV simultaneously.

Information on socio-demographics: age, duration of marriage, employment status, and education level were obtained.

### Statistical analysis

Linear regression analysis was done to examine the correlation between variables. The p-value of  $< 0.05$  was selected as a significant level.

## RESULTS

### Distribution of participants' characteristics

A total of 431 (92.69%) questionnaire returned with no missing data. All of the participants are suffering from IPV. 35.0% of participants and 32.9% of their husbands are between 30-39 years old. Marriage durations of 10-15 years' account for 24.5% of the cases. In terms of employment, 51.0% of participants and 73.8% of husbands are employed. The most common educational level is a bachelor's degree, held by 31.8% of participants and 28.1% of husbands (Table I).

### IPV Screening (WAST) results.

The median (IQR) IPV score was 8.0 with an interquartile range (IQR) of (7.0). 30.63% of women reported experiencing all forms of IPV (physical, emotional, and sexual) followed by single forms of IPV (28.54%), and combination of physical and emotional IPV (27.84%). Less than 10% of them had the combination of emotional and sexual IPV (3.48%) and unidentified form (9.51%). In contrast, no woman represents the combination of physical and sexual IPV (Table II).

### Relationship between Socio-Demographic Factors and IPV

In the univariable analysis, women aged 40–49, those married for more than 20 years, and those with higher education (diploma or bachelor's degree) reported lower IPV scores. On the other hand, having a husband

**Table I: Distribution of Participants' Characteristic Results (n = 431)**

Participants distribution	Frequency (%)	Husbands distribution	Frequency (%)
<b>Age (years)</b>			
18-29	121 (28.07)	69 (16.01)	
30-39	151 (35.04)	142 (32.95)	
40-49	119 (27.61)	131 (30.39)	
≥ 60	40 (9.28)	89 (20.65)	
<b>employment status</b>			
Employed	211 (49.00)	318 (73.80)	
Unemployed	220 (51.00)	113(26.20)	
<b>Education level</b>			
Below high school	70 (16.20)	69 (16.00)	
High school	68 (15.80)	112 (26.00)	
Diploma	115 (26.70)	91 (21.10)	
Bachelor	137 (31.80)	121 (28.10)	
Higher Education	41 (9.50)	38 (8.80)	
<b>Duration of marriage(years)</b>			
		<b>Frequency (%)</b>	
< 5		69 (16.01)	
10-May		100 (23.20)	
15-Oct		106 (24.59)	
15-20		67 (15.55)	
20-25		37 (8.58)	
> 25		52 (12.06)	

**Table II: Distribution of IPV Types among abused women attended in Family Protection Department, Irbid City, Jordan (n = 431)**

Variables	Frequency (%)	Median (IQR)
Total score of IPV		8.00(7.00)
<b>Type of IPV</b>		
All forms	132 (30.63)	
Unidentified	41 (9.51)	
Emotional	118 (27.38)	
Physical	4 (0.93)	
Sexual	1 (0.23)	
Emotional and sexual	15 (3.48)	
Physical and sexual	0	
Physical and emotional	120 (27.84)	

% - percentage IQR – interquartile range

**Table III: Relationship between Socio-Demographic Factors and Intimate Partner Violence among Abused Women Attended in Family Protection Department, Irbid City, Jordan (n=431)**

Variables Socio-Demographic	Simple linear regression B (95%CI)	p-value	Multiple linear regression B (95%CI)	p-value
<b>Participants' age</b>				
18-29	Ref		Ref	
30-39	-0.71 (-1.76,0.35)	0.187	-0.59 (-1.92,0.74)	0.383
40-49	-1.66 (-2.77,-0.54)*	0.004*	-0.07 (-1.94,1.80)	0.94
≥ 50	-1.48 (-3.05,0.10)	0.066	1.95 (-0.76,4.67)	0.158

**Table III: Relationship between Socio-Demographic Factors and Intimate Partner Violence among Abused Women Attended in Family Protection Department, Irbid City, Jordan (n=431) (CONT.)**

Variables Socio-Demographic	Simple linear regression B (95%CI)	p-value	Multiple linear regression B (95%CI)	p-value
<b>Husbands' Age</b>				
18-29	Ref		Ref	
30-39	-0.84 (-2.10,0.43)	0.193	-0.96 (-2.40,0.48)	0.191
40-49	-1.27 (-2.55,0.02)	0.053	-1.01 (-2.80,0.78)	0.267
≥ 50	-2.16 (-3.54,-0.77)*	0.002*	-1.31 (-3.51,0.89)	0.243
<b>Duration of marriage</b>				
< 5	Ref		Ref	
10-May	0.52 (-0.81,1.86)	0.442	1.21 (-0.24,2.67)	0.103
15-Oct	0.41 (-0.92,1.73)	0.546	1.29 (-0.34,2.93)	0.121
15-20	-0.09 (-1.56,1.37)	0.901	0.74 (-1.19,2.67)	0.451
20-25	-1.81 (-3.55,-0.07)*	0.042*	-1.62 (-4.01,0.76)	0.182
> 25	-2.03 (-3.60,-0.46)*	0.011*	-2.68 (-5.20,-0.16)*	0.037*
<b>Participants' Working Status</b>				
Employed	Ref		Ref	
Not employed	-0.03 (-0.87,0.81)	0.942	-0.7 (-1.62,0.22)	0.138
<b>Husbands' Working Status</b>				
Employed	Ref		Ref	
Not employed	1.38 (0.44,2.33)*	0.004*	1.7 (0.72,2.65)*	0.001*
<b>Participants' Education level</b>				
Below high school	Ref		Ref	
High school	-1.34 (-2.79,0.11)	0.07	-1.28 (-2.76,0.21)	0.091
Diploma	-2.89 (-4.18,-1.60)*	<0.001*	-2.9 (-4.30,-1.50)*	<0.001*
Bachelor	-2.19 (-3.44,-2.59)*	0.001*	-2.59 (-4.02,-1.16)*	<0.001*
Higher Education	-1.46 (-3.14,0.21)	0.087	-1.84 (-3.68,0.01)	0.051
<b>Husbands' Education level</b>				
Below high school	Ref		Ref	
High school	-0.57 (-1.90,0.76)	0.398	-0.23 (-1.55,1.10)	0.739
Diploma	-0.92 (-2.31,0.46)	0.191	0.11 (-1.35,1.58)	0.88
Bachelor	-1.24 (-2.55,0.07)	0.064	-0.14 (-1.55,1.26)	0.84
Higher Education	-0.93 (-2.67,0.83)	0.298	-0.01 (-1.85,1.83)	0.994

Ref: Reference group, B: Unstandardized coefficient, CI: Confidence interval, \*: Significant with p-value <0.05

CONTINUE

who was not employed was linked to higher IPV scores. In the multivariable analysis, three factors remained significant. Women who had been married for more than 25 years ( $B = -2.68$ ; 95% CI: -5.20, -0.16) and those with a diploma ( $B = -2.90$ ; 95% CI: -4.30, -1.50) or bachelor's degree ( $B = -2.59$ ; 95% CI: -4.02, -1.16) experienced lower IPV scores. However, women whose husbands were not employed ( $B = 1.70$ ; 95% CI: 0.72, 2.65) continued to report higher IPV scores (Table III).

## DISCUSSION

This study examines the distribution types of IPV and its relationship with socio-demographic factors among abused women in Jordan. Our findings indicated that all forms of IPV (30.6%) are the most reported by abused women in Jordan. This is relatively higher compared to previous studies conducted among Saudi Arabian women and Egyptian women, which reported all forms of IPV at 4.1% and 13.1%, respectively (8,9). The difference in proportion may be attributed to the varied use of measurement tools for IPV and the diverse backgrounds of participants. Our study population consists exclusively of women experiencing IPV who are seeking assistance from governmental authorities, whereas the study in Egypt included women residing in the community.

A single type of IPV (28.5%) was the second most prevalent form of IPV reported by the participants. In our study, a single type of IPV was categorized as participants experiencing only emotional, physical, or sexual IPV. Notably, almost 27.38% reported emotional IPV, while physical and sexual IPV were reported by 0.93% and 0.23% of participants, respectively. The low percentage in single occurrence of physical and sexual IPV may explain the absence of cases involving a combination of these two forms. In addition, our findings corroborate the findings from the previous study which found emotional IPV was the most frequently reported of the three types of IPV, and emotional IPV has always in combination with physical IPV or emotional violence with sexual IPV (4).

Marriage duration has a significant effect on IPV; the evidence suggests that longer marriages might be associated with lower levels of IPV. This may be attributed to the deficiency in social skills and inadequate problem-solving abilities among young couples. Conversely, the majority of women suffering IPV in Jordan endure the abuse over time, ultimately adopting silence and refraining from seeking help to maintain the family unit (10,11). This result aligns with previous studies from the same region (12).

Husbands' employment status has a significant positive effect on IPV. This is due to the link between employment and economic stability, especially in households where the husband's income is a primary

source of financial support. In such circumstances, wives who are entirely financially dependent with their husband may face significant barriers to leave abusive relationships (11). Meanwhile, participants with higher education levels have lower IPV. A higher education enhances confidence and self-esteem and empowering women to pursue assistance and resources, thereby diminishing their tolerance for violence.

The current research suggests that the increased incidence of various types of IPV among Jordanian women may be attributed to the prevailing male dominance in Jordanian society. Cultural norms in Jordan grant authority to men, often permitting the use of violence and coercion as means of handling marital disputes. Additionally, previous study found a significant proportion of Jordanian women (87.5%) perceive IPV as ethically acceptable and justifiable (10,13).

In our study, participants' age, husbands' age, and participants' employment status do not exhibit significant influences on IPV. The non-significant relationship between age and IPV observed in this study aligns with previous research. This could be attributed to the influence of other social and cultural factors that influence IPV in complex ways, potentially explaining the lack of a significant association between age and IPV (14). Meanwhile, the non-significant relationship between marriage duration and IPV may be linked to the lack of a significant association between age and IPV. This finding contrasts with a previous study which suggested that marriage duration and age are interrelated factors influencing IPV (15). Future studies should explore this discrepancy in greater detail. For the employment status variable, it does not inherently indicate its quality or the individual's overall experience. Instead, factors such as job satisfaction, salary, and work-life balance may be more critical in understanding their influence on IPV (16).

Given husband's employment and participant's educational level play significant influence on IPV, several actions were suggested to address this issue. Economic empowerment programs can help women gain employment and reduce financial dependence, making it easier to leave abusive relationships. Educational initiatives in schools and communities can also raise awareness about IPV, promote gender equality, and encourage healthy relationships.

It is important to acknowledge that this study has several limitations. First, it was conducted within a single governorate, and a convenience sampling method was used to recruit participants, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other governorates in Jordan. Second, the data were collected through a questionnaire, which introduces the potential for self-report bias. Nonetheless, the questionnaire used in this study was valid and reliable for both international

and local use. Third, the use of a cross-sectional design limited the establishment of cause-and-effect relationships. Fourth, the dropout rate was low (<10%) and did not affect the reliability or generalizability of our findings. The medium effect size (Cohen's  $f = 0.15$ ) used in the sample size calculation provides a realistic estimate of variable relationships and ensures adequate power to detect true effects, supporting the validity and generalizability of the findings.

## CONCLUSIONS

IPV frequently involves multiple forms, with emotional IPV being the most common among abused women in Jordan. Educational programs and women's empowerment initiatives could help reduce its occurrence.

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