



THE HIDDEN SIDE OF THE COVID-19 EPIDEMIC PROCESS INCREASING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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Abstract: After COVID-19, which took hold of the world when the least expected, was declared as a pandemic, quickly made its presence felt throughout the world, and this sudden evolvement undoubtedly affected the family structure and intrafamilial relations the most. While the quarantine process was an opportunity for families which could not get around to each other in family relationships, the situation was not at all heartwarming for family members who had problems in intrafamilial relationships. Home became the most used place in the quarantine process means that families spend time together longer than usual. As families who had problems in pre-COVID-19 period had to spend more time together at the quarantine process, this situation made this difficult situation even more troublesome for family members who experienced violence in the home. This study was conducted to compare the restrictions and quarantine months applied in the Covid-19 continuum with the months before the restriction. The aim of the study is to determine the percentage increase in the number of domestic violence cases that mount during the months restrictions were imposed due to quarantine. The study was carried out with the official figures taken from the courthouse of Tarsus district of Mersin province. The study was completed by comparing the average of the domestic violence applications made to the Tarsus courthouse, in the average months of March, April, May and June, which are the months of restrictions, and the monthly average of cases in September, October, November, December, January and February, which are the months before the restrictions. In the comparison made, it was found that there was a % 129.48 increase in domestic violence numbers during the quarantine months when restrictions were applied. When the quarantine months are compared with the months in the previous year, it was determined that the increase was 276.84%.

Keywords: Quarantine, Pandemic, Domestic violence, Covid-19, Tarsus

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1. Introduction

Domestic violence is a major problem that negatively affects the lives of family members and thus the social structure in both urban and rural life. Although this problem is a common problem not only in our country but also in all countries of the world, it is increasing rapidly every year. Violence is accepted as a public health problem that can be seen in all areas of human life and its prevalence is increasing in terms of the world. Domestic violence, on the other hand, is defined as an act carried out by one of the family members towards another family member, who shares the same house and has a kinship relationship, which disrupts the physical and psychological integrity of the individual subjected to violence and harms his/her personality. When the types of violence are examined, it is seen that domestic violence, which is applied by men against women and children, is stated as the most common type of violence regardless of variables such as geographical boundaries, economic development level and education level, and

violence is expressed as an important problem all over the world and cultures (Aksoy et al., 2013).

Domestic violence can be defined as any kind of aggressive behavior that a person exerts against his/her spouse, children, parents, siblings or close relatives (Akın, 2013). All kinds of aggressive behaviors include not only physical behaviors that constitute physical violence but also economic, emotional and sexual violence that occurs as a result of behaviors such as threatening, despising, humiliating and restricting economic freedom (Mor Çatı, 2015). Undoubtedly, women are the ones who are most exposed to domestic violence. Although there are quite sufficient legal regulations regarding domestic violence in Türkiye, violence continues to increase day by day. In particular, female children and women are exposed to physical, economic, psychological and sexual violence in the context of the nuclear family, extended family, on the street, at school and in business life, and the violence has very comprehensive consequences ranging from female



children's inability to read to women's inability to participate effectively in social life, to the unwanted marriages arising due to the increase of women's violence against their children and disabilities and deaths.

The epidemic caused by COVID-19, which has turned into a pandemic, still continues to have an effect all over the world. Many countries have implemented various measures such as social distancing, isolation and, in some cases, quarantine in order to control the epidemic despite the rapid spread of the virus and the absence of drugs or vaccines that have been proven to be effective. With social isolation measures and quarantine practices, there have been reports that crime rates in the society have decreased in various parts of the world, but domestic violence, violence against women and domestic violence have increased and concerns have been expressed in this regard (Toprak et al., 2020). Following the news in the media, the World Health Organization published a report in March 2020 that drew attention to this situation and included recommendations for the health systems of the countries (Time, 2020). Similarly, the Council of Europe reported an alarming increase in cases of domestic violence in a large number of council members during the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of this study is to investigate how the COVID-19 process affects the family and domestic violence.

2. Significance of the Study

The pandemic process, which increases its intensity more and more, undoubtedly increases the unknown and curious issues day by day. With this study, the effects of family and domestic violence, which are among the institutions most affected by this process, have been revealed. During the pandemic period, isolation at home has been recommended as the safest measure to protect from the virus and not to infect others. However, houses, which should be a safe area for everyone, are very risky places for individuals who are exposed to domestic violence. Those who committed violence and individuals who were exposed to it with the epidemic suddenly closed down in their houses and entered a process in which the risk of exposure to domestic violence increased even more by being stuck in an abusive relationship.

In this context, social isolation at home has made individuals who are exposed to domestic violence vulnerable to another danger while protecting them from a danger. It is known that the risk is higher especially for vulnerable groups such as women, children, elderly and disabled individuals. Women who were most exposed to domestic violence had more difficulty in reaching support mechanisms than ever before when they were locked in a house with men who committed violence 24 hours a day. Women call the helplines at the first opportunity they are alone, and they are afraid of being exposed to more violence if the violent man is aware of it (Mor Çatı, 2020). It is also reported that some individuals

who are exposed to domestic violence are afraid to go to hospitals due to the fear of COVID-19 contagion (Usher, 2020). Social isolation has also made it difficult for women to access social supports such as family or friends, and the traces of violence have been hidden in the house. In addition, women were dismissed due to the pandemic or forced to take unpaid leave. Economic losses/difficulties may have made it even more difficult to leave the violent spouse/partner and thus move away from violence (Washington Post, 2020).

3. Literature Review

3.1. Definition of Domestic Violence

The family, which should be a unit that meets the nutritional and care needs of individuals, gives a sense of trust, protects and improves physical and mental health, is often the only focus where all kinds of violence are nourished and applied (Aile, 2004). While the society is held responsible for the violence that takes place outside the family, the violence occurring within the family remains confidential, is accepted as a private life, and is often accepted as usual and legally (Dekeşeredy, 2004). Public awareness about domestic violence is very variable. There may be opinions in the form of not believing and denying the existence of such violence, as well as opinions that approve such violence. Violence is all of the individual or collective movements that cause people to be physically or mentally injured, injured and disabled. Domestic violence, on the other hand, refers to the realization of such a movement in the family. Domestic violence is largely directed at women and children, and the person who committed this violence is also a man. 90% of the physical and sexual violence reported by psychiatric patients was committed by family members. All of the behaviors that disrupt the mental and physical integrity of the child are defined as child abuse. Another frequently used concept in this field is child neglect. This means that parents do not meet the basic vital needs of children such as care, nutrition, shelter, warm-up, dressing, meeting their health and education needs, or do not adopt a wrong attitude and use contemporary information on these issues.

3.2. Causes of Violence

The causes of violence are very diverse and complex. In terms of easy understanding, it is possible to collect the causes of violence in general and domestic violence in particular under three main headings: biological reasons, psychological reasons and social reasons.

3.3. Biological Causes of Domestic Violence

Biological causes include some mental illnesses such as the effect of masculinity hormones, schizophrenia, paranoid schizophrenia, and some mental disorders such as antisocial personality disorder. The fact that the aggressive family members who commit violence are mostly men and that these aggressive behaviors start to decrease with advancing age suggests that masculinity hormones are effective in violent behavior. Delusions, hallucinations (seeing, hearing or smelling things that do

not really exist), schizophrenia that occurs with symptoms such as distancing from reality, loss of emotional responses, deterioration of social relations, and paranoid schizophrenia, which is a special type of this, where feelings such as suspicion, jealousy, and arrogance come to the forefront, are among the biological causes (Jackson 1999). Antisocial personality disorders, in which attitudes such as irresponsible, reactive and thoughtless behavior, showing unscrupulous and criminal behaviors and enjoying them are seen, are among the biological causes of violence.

3.4. Psychological Causes of Domestic Violence

Women who are constantly subjected to domestic violence, that is, beaten by their spouses, have not chosen to be like this. Most spouses who commit violence do not practice it in the early stages of family unity. When deep spiritual ties begin to form, then violent tendencies manifest themselves (Bilgel, 2006). The first attack of violence is a surprise for the abused spouse and is not interpreted in any way as a tendency to violence. But the truth is that the nature of violence tends to increase over time. Initial injuries are considered minor and insignificant, and the abused spouse believes that the abusive spouse does not intend to harm him/her. There is no significant change in their feelings towards their spouse. However, when the extent of violence progresses, the emotional bond of the violated spouse gradually weakens, the fear of encountering a greater attack of violence increases if he/she leaves his/her spouse. Added to this, the concern of not receiving support from social institutions, the spouse who has been subjected to violence finds himself/herself trapped in a devastating marriage trap. People who use violence continue to use violence if they think that the benefit they will receive from this violence is more than the cost of violence. Why do men beat up women? Because they can. For men, the gains of beating their spouses are to eliminate emotional pressures, find a way out of their disappointment, and ensure that their own desires come true. On the other hand, the cost is quite low. Because: Women cannot resist this because they are physically and economically vulnerable, society regards this phenomenon as a private domestic issue and the efforts of protective social organizations are limited. The most serious cost that the person who commits violence may face is the loss of the spouse through divorce, which is often controlled by increasing the use of violence.

3.5. Social Causes of Domestic Violence

Violence is a behavior that can be learned. The most important source of learning is the family of the person who uses violence. It has been shown that those who grow up in an environment where domestic violence is practiced in childhood and youth have a tendency to show violence. In addition, the acceptance of violence as a value judgment shared by the society and its transfer from generation to generation is also accepted as a social reason. The inadequacy of communication skills of societies, the habit of expressing emotions and thoughts

in provocative ways, unconscious accusations, false sense of honor and morality can also be counted among the social causes of violence. Socio-economic pressures such as poverty, being unlucky in the face of life, lack of expectations and acquired qualities may also cause violence. People with alcohol and substance addiction are more prone to violence as a result of the mental effects caused by these social factors and the addictive substances they use (Yetim, 2008; Yıldırım, 2013).

3.6. Types of Domestic Violence

Domestic violence can occur in different ways when its application and the people to whom it is applied are taken into consideration. As per its application: Physical, emotional (psychological) and economic violence can be mentioned.

3.7. Physical Violence

It is the most common form of domestic violence. Physical violence practices include shaking, beating, slapping, beating, throwing objects at the individual, hitting the walls, dragging the individual by the hair and to the ground, pushing, beating him/her with sticks and wood, tying the individual's hands, forcibly having sexual intercourse, walking onto the individual with sharp objects, and using the same to injure the individual, using firearms, and killing persons (Aktaş, 2006).

3.8. Emotional Violence

All of the actions that are performed without physical pressure such as yelling at the person, humiliating the person in front of others, hurting his/her pride, threatening to inflict physical violence, taking away the freedom of expression of the person's feelings and thoughts, forcing him/her to think and act as himself/herself, restricting the freedom of movement of the person, prohibiting communication with his/her family members or friends, restricting the freedom of dressing as the person desires, and disrupting his/her mental health are within the scope of emotional violence (Aksoy, 1999).

3.9. Economic Violence

Actions such as taking away the freedom of people to work and to provide income, preventing them from buying and selling goods, confiscating their income, and forcing them to work to provide income (Aksoy, 1999). According to the people to whom domestic violence is applied, it may be in the form of violence against spouses, children or elderly people at home. In terms of violence against spouses, it is more common for men to use violence against women.

3.10. Domestic Violence during the Covid-19 Process

During the pandemic period, isolation at home has been recommended as the safest measure to protect from the virus and not to infect others. However, houses, which should be a safe area for everyone, are very risky places for women, children and the elderly who are exposed to violence. Those who committed violence with the epidemic and those who were exposed to violence suddenly closed down at home and entered a process in which the risk of exposure to domestic violence

increased even more by being stuck in an abusive relationship. In this context, while social isolation at home protects from the risk of COVID-19, it has made it open to another danger. It is reported that the risk is higher especially for disadvantaged groups such as women, children, elderly and disabled. While women were locked in a house with men who committed violence for 24 hours in this process, they had more difficulty than ever in accessing support mechanisms. Women call the helplines at the first opportunity they are alone, and they are afraid of being exposed to more violence if the violent man is aware of it.

It is also reported that some women who are exposed to domestic violence are afraid to go to hospitals due to the fear of COVID-19 transmission. Social isolation also made it difficult for those who were exposed to violence to access social supports such as family or friends, and the traces of violence were hidden in the house. In addition, women who were most exposed to domestic violence were dismissed or forced to take unpaid leave due to the pandemic, and economic losses/difficulties made it more difficult to leave the violent spouse/partner and thus to get away from violence. With the widespread use of the Internet and technology in recent years, digital violence is on the agenda as a new form of gender-based violence. Digital violence is defined as the sending, publishing and persistent pursuit of materials such as insult, threat, hate, blasphemy or sexually explicit writing, image, etc. against women in the digital internet environment. It has been reported that the number of applications received due to digital violence in Türkiye has increased during the pandemic period and constitutes 11% of all notifications. This increase seems to be related to the increase in the use of technology in homes with staying at home to ensure social isolation. In addition to being limited to the spouse/partner who inflicts violence at home, it is reported that many factors such as a general fear and uncertainty about the epidemic in the society, psychological problems caused by increasing unemployment and economic difficulties, difficulties in accessing the health system, and an increase in alcohol consumption caused by isolation at home increase domestic violence. Previous epidemic and natural disaster experiences in the world similarly show that family violence increases during the epidemic process and, on the other hand, preventive and preventive activities decrease. In addition, it is stated that the increase in domestic violence incidents that increase after natural disasters can last up to one year after the end of the disaster.

4. Method

As a result of the examination of the data shared on the internet, the basic data of the research were obtained by subjecting it to content analysis with literature review. In addition, the Tarsus example, which is an example related to this subject, was evaluated. In the Tarsus example, the main data of the study constitute the

number of monthly domestic violence applications received from the Tarsus Courthouse. By applying to Tarsus Courthouse with a petition, the monthly number of people who applied for domestic violence was requested. The number of domestic violence in March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December, January and February of the previous year was taken as the prequarantine period on a monthly basis. As for the quarantine period, the number of domestic violence in March, April, May and June was taken on a monthly basis due to the first Covid19 case announced on March 13 in Türkiye. The number of domestic violence officially received from the Tarsus Courthouse was divided into two periods as pre-quarantine and quarantine period. At the same time, these months were compared with the same periods of the previous year and averaged. These averages were compared and the percentage increase in the quarantine process was calculated.

5. Findings and Interpretation

Even in the routine flow of life, when the situation is so dire, what kind of change occurs in domestic violence when life goes beyond the normal flow? How did the restrictions applied during the COVID-19 process affected the domestic violence cases, which is the main question of the study? Did it increase or decrease? It did. As a result of the research conducted to find the answer to this question, it has been determined that the general increase in domestic violence in Tarsus district during the COVID-19 process and the restrictions applied during the quarantine process is 129.48%, and the increase in family violence in the comparison of the quarantine months with the same months of the previous year is 276.84%.

The number of 12-month cases was determined and averaged before March, the month in which the restriction and quarantine applications started. Accordingly, there were a total of 2253 applications to the Tarsus courthouse for domestic violence incidents, 94 in March 2019, 101 in April 2019, 93 in May 2019, 92 in June 2019, 102 in July 2019, 89 in August 2019, 150 in September 2019, 293 in October 2019, 310 in November 2019, 302 in December 2019, 341 in January 2020 and 286 in February 2020. The monthly average of domestic violence cases in these 12-month months before the quarantine process is 187.75.

The first case of COVID-19 in Türkiye was announced by the Ministry of Health on March 16 2019 and restrictions and quarantine measures have been implemented almost everywhere and in all segments since then. In this study, since domestic violence cases are monthly, a four-month period was taken as the month in which the restrictions and quarantine process started, including March and June, which is the month in which the restrictions were lifted. In this case, there were 335 applications to the Tarsus courthouse in March, which was the month when the quarantine restrictions started, 237 in April, 382 in

May, and 478 applications in June, which was the month when the restrictions started to be relaxed. There were a total of 1432 applications in this four-month period where restrictions and quarantine measures were applied, and the monthly average of domestic violence cases in this four-month period was 358. Considering the monthly average rates, there was an increase of 129.48% in domestic violence cases in Tarsus district during the COVID-19 process. The ratio of the quarantine period and the months in which the restrictions were applied to the months in the previous year was 94 in March 2019, 101 in April 2019, 93 in May 2019, 92 in June 2019, and the average of these months was 94. When the quarantine months are calculated, it is 335 in March 2020, 237 in April 2020, 382 in May 2020, and 478 in June 2020. The average of the quarantine months is 358. When the same months of the two years were compared, there was an increase of 276.84% in domestic violence cases.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 Pandemic has deeply affected all segments of society and has negatively affected every condition related to human and human, which is the basic building block of society. This process, which completely affects the daily routine life activities of humanity, has caused the economic and economic activities to be affected negatively and even stopped. Global giant brands of the world have been incapacitated in this process and have had difficulty in producing solutions for a short time. Quarantine practices have locked people up in their homes, so to speak, and for the first time in the history of the world, humanity has witnessed house arrest in all countries. People are unable to do their daily work or even meet their daily needs.

The main subject of the study is the situation followed by domestic violence during the COVID-19 quarantine and restriction process. As the research clearly reveals, the COVID-19 process negatively affected almost all segments, as well as negatively affected family relations, and accordingly, triggered the increase in domestic violence. Individuals' staying indoors for a long time, not being able to meet their needs, not being able to fulfill their economic activities, stopping trade, and being prevented increased their feelings and caused people to experience the process of house arrest.

In this process, it was determined that the conflicts between the husband and wife increased in the family members who shared the same environment at home for a long time. The study clearly reveals that violence is increasing exponentially and rapidly day by day. The family, which constitutes the basic structure of the society, is one of the most affected institutions in this process. It has been determined that the cases of domestic violence during the quarantine months where the restrictions are applied increased by 129.48% and the increase in the quarantine months compared to the previous year is 276.84%.

As a suggestion for institutions to prevent domestic

violence:

It has been determined that as the time spent indoors with quarantine applications increases, domestic violence increases in parallel with this. In such cases, it should be known that there will be a general increase in domestic violence during curfews and it may be suggested to take measures by the competent authorities accordingly.

Author Contributions

The percentage of the author(s) contributions is present below. The authors reviewed and approved final version of the manuscript.

	B.C.	R.E.	A.B.	İ.Y.	H.T.	E.E.
C	20	16	16	16	16	16
D	20	16	16	16	16	16
S	20	16	16	16	16	16
DCP	20	16	16	16	16	16
DAI	20	16	16	16	16	16
L	20	16	16	16	16	16
W	20	16	16	16	16	16
CR	20	16	16	16	16	16
SR	20	16	16	16	16	16
PM	20	16	16	16	16	16
FA	20	16	16	16	16	16

C=Concept, D= design, S= supervision, DCP= data collection and/or processing, DAI= data analysis and/or interpretation, L= literature search, W= writing, CR= critical review, SR= submission and revision, PM= project management, FA= funding acquisition.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Ethical Consideration

The research data were obtained from the Tarsus courthouse and there is no situation that requires ethical approval.

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