

# *“Help Seeking Behaviour” Among Women Who Had Domestic Violence*

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**Abstract** – Violence against women by partner can cause health problems that require special handling. The study of help seeking behavior for domestic violence's victims has never been explored in depth. The identification and special handling of women's health problems who had violence are not available yet in health services system. This research intends to explore health problems for seeking help. The qualitative research with a phenomenological approach with maximum variation sampling according to specified inclusion criteria. The number of participants were 12 people. The collecting of qualitative data used in-depth interviews and FGD. The research instrument used an interview guide and tested validity and reliability. The data analysis used thematic analysis. This research found that violence experience varied according to type, namely physical, psychological/emotional and sexual. In fact, they experienced more than one type of violence at once. The help seeking behavior for women who had domestic violence very varied and tended to informal sector although there were some who was seeking for help in the formal sector or institutions that could handle violence's cases. Women tended to overcome and heal themselves, asked for neighbors' help, reported to the women's empowerment office. Women of violence's victims who had bruises on their bodies and faces, seeking for help at the Public Health Center for treatment, and provided a medical statement (visum et repertum) for police investigations. In addition, they sought for help from a shaman to treat their husbands to have a calmer, less abusive attitude and more loving to his family and wife.

**Keywords** – Domestic Violence, Health Problems, Help Seeking Behavior.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Violence against women by partner is a serious problem and has consequences both short and long term health problems<sup>1</sup>. The risk factors for domestic violence are related to age, family type, non-permanent work, income gap between husband and wife and attitudes towards sex<sup>2</sup>. In addition, domestic violence can also be caused by a third person in the family. The risk women as victims of violence are those who have a partner who uses alcohol, drugs, unemployment, low education, or infidelity by a partner<sup>3</sup>. Domestic violence in developing countries is related to socioeconomic status, education, demographics, age, number

of children and the status of women's autonomy in the family<sup>4</sup>.

Annual records of the women's national commission in 2017, were reported there were 259,150 cases of violence against women during 2016. In the realm of households, physical violence was 42% (4,281 cases), sexual violence 34% (3,495 cases), psychological violence 14% (1,451 cases) and economic violence 10% (978 cases). Sexual violence, rape occupies the highest position of 1,389 cases, sexual abuse of 1,266 cases. The marital rape cases have also been reported of 135 cases<sup>5</sup>. Domestic violence has an impact on physical, mental, self-esteem disorders, helplessness, depression and leaving deep trauma<sup>6</sup>.

The women who had sexual problems due to violence have a comprehensive impact on their health problems both physically, psychologically and psychosocially. The violence's victims become an endless problem. There is no in-depth study yet for violence's victims in overcoming their health problems after the violence they had. How do they heal themselves or where do they seek for help because of the violence they had. Meanwhile, the Public Health Center has not done swapped specifically towards violence's cases that have to be handled seriously but it still handles health problems that had by violence's victims that require treatment. This research intends to explore health problems that occur in women who had violence and help seeking behaviour in women who had domestic violence.

## **II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The qualitative research with phenomenological approach in one of the districts in West Borneo consists of 12 participants using maximum variation sampling<sup>7</sup>. The searching of participants is obtained from data of woman empowerment, Public Health Center, and the police. Inclusion criteria in the sampling of this research are women of childbearing age (20-45 years old) who had domestic violence, women of childbearing age who used hormonal contraception type only progesterone were not included in this research. In general, the research ethics fulfills the principles of: *beneficence*, *justice* and *informed consent* and has passed the ethical test.

## **III. COLLECTING DATA AND RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

The collecting of qualitative data used *in-depth interview* and *focus group discussions* with the research instrument that used was interview guideline. In addition, the researchers also used research data collection's media such as voice recorder, camera and other supporting tools. The test of validity and reliability in this research used descriptive validity, interpretative validity, theoretical validity, generalizability and evaluative validity<sup>25</sup>. Researchers validated the data by using *triangulation* and *member checking*. The triangulation that used were sources, time and theory triangulations. The researchers did member checking for data that needed to be confirmed one more. The data analysis was done to explore attitude, behavior and experiences in explaining phenomena, and also developing new theories<sup>8</sup>. The data analysis in this research looked at the types of violence experienced, health problems related to violence's cases as well as help seeking behaviour. This research used thematic analysis.

## **IV. THE RESULTS OF RESEARCH**

### **4.1. Domestic violence's experiences.**

Women who had domestic violence told of their experiences of domestic violence. The experience of violence varied according to type, even they had several types of violence at once, both physical, psychological / emotional and sexual. As stated by the following participants:

*"... At that time I was pregnant, I am going to give birth ... my husband invites me to have sex ... but I refused because I felt pain in my stomach, it could be contractions. My husband was angry, then hit me ... I felt sad ma'am ... "(Participant L)*

*"... I am often beaten ... I was beaten, slapped and pushed ma'am ... at that time my husband was like an unconscious person when doing violence ... I screamed for help ma'am ... "(Participant M)*

### **4.2. Reproductive health problems in women who had domestic violence**

The women who had domestic violence having problems that affect not only on their physical condition but also their psychological condition. The condition of women who had domestic violence from an aspect of health was an endless problem, especially if this incident was done repeatedly. Psychologically, the women would feel angry emotions towards their partners, even it could cause feelings of hatred to partner, even had stress that would cause interference with daily activities.

*"...I hate when I am seeing my husband.. My heart is so sad, why does he treat me like this? I feel my life is worthless"  
(Participant K)*

*"... I feel disappointed ma'am, hurt, and feel unhappy with my married life. My husband is look like wasting my life ... "(Participant V)*

*"... After I had the violence, like being beaten or insulted by my husband, my whole body feel weak and helpless, I am not eager to do anything. Sometimes I stay in my room for 3 to 3 days, my heart is broken ... I am sorry for my children, they are neglected because of my condition ... "(Participant F)*

Domestic violence has an impact on physical problems experienced by women besides psychological problems. Women had pain, and injuries that could be caused blunt force impact or trauma, slaps or blows to the victim's bodies. The problems and signs of physical symptoms because of violence experienced could be seen from what the following participants stated:

*"... My body and face is so hurt ma'am ... I was beaten, slapped, and my husband pushed me until I fell on the floor, while saying rude and insulting me ... I am not able to fight back, because my energy is not as strong as my husband's..*  
*"(Participant N)*

*"... My body is very pain, I was also not allowed by my husband to leave the house, maybe my husband is afraid if I will report to the neighbors or parents. Usually I feel dizzy after being hit especially my head. My body is also bruised due to a blunt object ..."* (Participant M)

*"My face feel swollen and also bruised because of a punch and has also been punched by my husband on my face), at that time my eyes were beaten, there was bleeding, my eyes and the lower eyes reddened ... very painful ma'am. ..*  
*"(Participant J)*

#### **4.3. Help seeking behaviour on women who had domestic violence**

Women tend to avoid their social environment and be quiet when experiencing domestic violence, this is because they feel ashamed if the problems in their household are known by others and they thought that by telling the problem, it will burden their parents and family's mind. The statement as stated by the following participants:

*"... although I am often beaten or treated rudely by my husband, but I keep a silent... I am ashamed if I have to tell someone else ..."*  
*(Participant F)*

*"... I don't want to inform my parents or neighbors, I'm embarrassed and I'm worried that it would become a problem and burden my parents ..."* (Participant V)

*"... I have never talked to anyone, because it is something embarrassed for our family. During this time I just let my husband treated me like that, I pray in order to my husband realizes that what he has done to me, it hurt his wife and my children.."* (Participant U)

Some women try to find help by screaming and running outside to ask for help from neighbors when they are able to escape during domestic violence. As stated by the following participants who are forced to have sexual intercourse when her pregnancy is enough to deliver and planned to give birth by cesarean section surgery.

*"... I try to escape and ran out of the house ... and I scream for help, but the neighbors do not dare to get involve in my family's because my husband was angry, my face was slapped and punched so strongly,so my face was reddish and bruise ma'am. I couldn't leave the house until the bruises on my face disappeared, and my husband took me to the Public Health Center. I have an opportunity to tell my problem to the officer there..."* (Participant L)

*"... I asked my neighbor for help, I shouted for help so that my neighbors came to my house, so that my husband stopped hitting me ... I am not strong, ma'am ..."* (Participant M)

The Participants also reported to the Public Health Center's staff to ask for help related to the violence they had and endangered their wombs, as stated by victims of domestic violence and by health workers who handled their health.

*"... Some women of domestic violence's victims come to us for treatment because of bruises suffered on the body and some on the face ... but we believe that only a small number of people who went to the health center or health workers, because they are ashamed and assume that it is a family's stigma that other people didn't need to know ma'am ..."* (Participant HW)

*"... They said that the cause of pain in their bodies was because of the bad actions of their husbands who liked to hit ..."* (Participant HW)

*"I am screaming for help, trying to run to the community health center, asking for the help of the nurse there ..."* (Participant M)

Some women had an initiative to report to the women empowerment and the police to ask for legal assistance related to the case they experienced. So far, the follow-up of reporting has been to carry out outoptions on victims and provide sanctions as a deterrent effect on perpetrators according to applicable law. As stated by the following participants.

*"... there is a report from domestic violence's women victims ... we provide assistance, the victims also report to the police and is followed up with a medical staement ... there are some of them who had several violences..."* (Participant WE)

*"... We have received complaints related to violence by partner, the next step is doing a medical statement (visum et repertum), it has entered the realm of law ... There is its law ..."* (Participant PO)

*"... I ask for help to the women's empowerment office, ma'am ... I don't want to be persecuted by my husband anymore"* (Participant F)

*"... I was carried to the police by the neighbor ma'am, and then I was examined...having a medical statement (visum et repertum), then my husband was arrested, and went to jail, ma'am ..."* (Participant M)

In addition, The women also tried to treat their husbands with their beliefs. According to the advice of one of family members and victims' female friends who had domestic violence, they asked for a shaman's help. Shamans are considered to be able to cure her husband from being rude, calmer, more loving towards his family his wife and his children, as stated by the following 2 participants ...

*"... I was invited by my brother-in-law to go to a shaman and get medicine formed powder, then the medicine is put into my husband's drink, he said to make my husband aware and love me and my children more ..."* ( Participant L)

*"... I asked for holy water from psychic ma'am, it is put in my husband's drink, so he could calm down and not be angry. If he were angry, he would be like possessed by a demon ..."* (Participant M)

The various ways have done by domestic violence's women victims to overcome their problems. Some women tended to heal the physical injuries they had and neutralize their mental states at home. While the other victims asked neighbors and family for help. There were also those who took the initiative to report to the women empowerment, reported to the unit that handles cases of violence against women and children in the police, went to the Public Health Center and even went to the shaman for treatment.

## **V. DISCUSSION**

Domestic violence has an impact on women's lives as a whole. Women who have domestic do not only have physical problems, but also psychosocial, mental and social problems.

The results of this research reported on the violence experience of women. Women victims of domestic violence reported her violence experience. The experience of violence varies according to type, they have physical, emotional, sexual violence that can stand alone or have several types of violence at once.

Women tend to overcome the problem of violence in their own households and heal by themselves. Women victims of violence feel a shamed if they have to tell her problem to others, although there are also those who report or tell their families, such as her siblings or parents. Women of violence feel ashamed and consider it as family's stigma that does not need to be told to others. Another way to find help is by asking for help to the nearest neighbor when experiencing violence from her husband. Some even report and tell about the violence to the women empowerment and the police in order to be able helping the problems they are facing.

The results of this research found that women tended to heal themselves or asked for help from neighbors or from the community and not from legal institutions. Women of violence victims did many various ways to make their households better and treat their husbands by asking for help from a shaman which aims to treat her husband to have a calmer, less abusive, and more loving love family and his wife.

Field findings found that women did not want to get involved with law problems and tended to forgive the person.

The education factor of violence victims was thought as factor that causes women's knowledge to be limited and did not know where should looking for help if they had violent behavior in their household. This is in line with the results of the previous research which stated that education factors and socioeconomic status were related to the decision of women victims of domestic violence to seek help in order to the violence experienced can be stopped. Basically, women victims of violence used formal or informal assistance to help solve their problems. However, this research found that informal assistance was more favored than formal assistance in India<sup>9</sup>.

Violence can have an impact on women's health, whether physical, psychological / emotional, mental or social. The impact that can occur was like stress, anxiety, eating and sleep disorders, self-conception due to a shame and humiliation and sexual function disorders <sup>10</sup>. Violence that occurs can leave a negative impression and trauma not only to the wife, but also to children and other family members indirectly. The results of this research found that some women sought formal institutional assistance after the violence they had.

The women victims of violence who had health problems, such as bruises and bruises on the body and face, seeking for help to Public Health Center for treatment, and conduct a medical statement (*visum et repertum*) action for investigative purposes in the police. Some of the performers have even went to prison because they were reported to the police with neighbors' assistances.

to overcome the problem of violence in their own households and heal by themselves. Another ways to find help was asking for help to the nearest neighbor when they had violence from their husband. Some even reported and told of violence experienced to women empowerment in order to help the problems they were facing. The women victims of violence who had health problems, such as bruises and bruises on the body and face, seeking for help at the public health center for treatment, and had a medical statement (*visum et repertum*) for investigative purposes in the police. The women victims of violence made various ways to improve their households and treat their husbands by asking for help with a shaman, who aims to treat her husband to have a calmer, less abusive attitude and more loving to his family and wife.

## **VII. RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS**

Further studies are needed related to cultural aspects that influence decisions in seeking for help for victims of violence

The research of help seeking behaviour of violence victims especially in developing countries, revealed 34.88% of domestic violence's victims sought for help and the majority of victims who sought for help reached family members (63.10%). Some of them (3.24%) sought for help from formal institutions. The results of the general hierarchical linear regression model indicated the severity of abuse, the attitudes of domestic violence affected the possibility of seeking for help. The government policy about the domestic violence regulations does not relate to the efforts of seeking help <sup>11</sup>.

The weaknesses in this research is it has not explored yet the impact of domestic violence on children and other family members. In addition, several factors such as recognizing and overcoming cultural barriers that can hold up the behavior of seeking for help and it is also need in-depth study, so it needs to be done in the next researches.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

The results of this research reported about violence experience who had by women. The women victims of domestic violence reported the experiences of domestic violence experienced. The experience of violence varies according to type, they experience physical, emotional, sexual violence that can stand alone or experience several types of violence at once. Women who had domestic violence tend to seek for help in the informal sector, although there were some who seek for help in the formal sector or institutions that can handle violence cases. The women tend

and then the impact of violence on children, families and the surrounding environment.

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