

Abstract

Background: The HIV/AIDS pandemic has largely affected women in Africa. Apart from the physiological susceptibility to HIV infection, factors such as intimate partner violence (IPV) are considered to heighten the risk of infection for women. In 2009, sixty percent of all new infections were contracted within married unions in Zambia. HIV prevalence rates for women continue to remain high in Zambia while IPV is a rampant social problem in this society. Thus, this study examines the relationship between intimate partner violence and HIV status of currently married women in Zambia.

Methods: The study used the 2007 Zambian Demographic and Health Survey data to achieve the objectives of the study. The study included a sample of 2 895 currently married women aged 15-49 who participated in the domestic violence module and the HIV test. The main independent variable of the study was IPV and covariates included: age of respondent, age at sexual debut, religion, highest education level, household wealth index, place of residence, the country's provinces, partners age and partners education. The dependent variable of the study was HIV status. Data analysis was conducted in three stages. Firstly, a univariate analysis was conducted to show the prevalence's of HIV and IPV. A bivariate analysis was also conducted; which illustrate the distribution of the population's characteristics by the dependent variable. Secondly, Binomial Logistic regression was used to examine the relationships between each of the independent variables and dependent variable. Thirdly, Multivariate Logistic Regression was used to examine the relationship between IPV and HIV status while controlling for selected covariates.

Results: HIV prevalence of 14 percent was found among currently married women while 43 percent of the women experienced violence from an intimate partner. It was found that women who experienced both physical and sexual violence were more likely to be HIV positive. The more educated and affluent the women were; the more likely they were to be HIV positive. Age of the respondent and partner's age were also found to have significant relationships with the HIV status of women.

Conclusion In Zambia, there was a relationship found between IPV and the HIV status of currently married women. The sustained high prevalence of IPV and HIV amongst women in Zambia is of social and public health concern and should be addressed if the country wants to effectively reduce the infection rate of women.

Keywords; intimate partner violence, HIV, currently married women