

Predicting Home Violence, According to Perceived Social Support and Marital Satisfaction for Infertility Women in Tehran, Iran

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ABSTRACT

Background: Studies in many regions of the world indicate that women bear the burden of infertility. Infertile couples are expected to be involved in various psychological and social problems. Social support may lessen the psychological pain of infertility in women. Also, violence and inequality against women are raised in such families. This research aims to survey domestic violence in women based on social support and marital satisfaction in infertile women in Tehran.

Methods: In this study in 2018, authorities randomly selected 130 infertile women for an interview in Avicenna infertility center in Tehran. After obtaining informed consent, participants completed a questionnaire. It included domestic violence against women, social support (MSPSS) and marital satisfaction (Enrich 47) questionnaires. Data and statistical analysis of the research hypotheses was performed using SPSS v22. Moreover, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Watson's camera statistics, Pearson correlation coefficient, multivariate correlation coefficient and simultaneous multivariate regression analysis were used. The significance level was considered less than 0.05 and the confidence interval (CI) was 95%.

Results: In this study, the mean age of women was 31.63 (47-23) and the mean duration of the marriage was 0.50 (2-20). Two variables of social support and marital satisfaction predicted the domestic violence against women to be 0.388 (38.8%). Marital satisfaction had a significant effect on domestic violence against infertile women ($p=0.001$). The higher the marital satisfaction ($T= -8.997$, $p= 0.001$), the less would be the domestic violence against infertile women.

Conclusion: Findings showed that in infertile women, domestic violence is predictable with perceived social support and marital satisfaction.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Social Support, Marital Satisfaction, Infertility

Introduction

Nowadays; individuals get married because of personal and social reasons. Childbearing and fertility is one of the main goals of marriage. Furthermore, childbearing and parenting in many societies have been one of the most prominent features of female roles; therefore, infertility has traditionally been regarded as a female problem (Jafarian, 2016).

Studies in many parts of the world demonstrated that women carry the main burden of infertility. It encompasses blame for failure in childbirth, distress, anxiety, sadness, fear, and social rejection, threats of divorce and leaving, and polygamy. According to another research in this field, infertile couples are expected to be involved in various psychological and social problems (Latifian, 2016, Peyvastehgar, 2016).

Social support may reduce the psychological pain of infertility in women. Perceived social support is also very important. It refers to one's cognitive appraisal of support in his/her relations. Theorists believe that all relations of a person with others are not considered social support unless one evaluates them as an accessible and appropriate resource to meet his/her needs (Salami, 2009, Soleimani, 1994). In addition to being a burden and the difficulty of infertility in Iranian families, especially in women, violence and inequality against women happen in the family. The scope of this violence can extend to institutions beyond the family. According to the 1993 United Nations definition, domestic violence means any gender-based violent behavior that causes harm to physical, sexual or psychological aspects of women. Such behavior can happen due to threat, forced liberty limitation, in society or in secret (Sepahvand, 2017, Cheraghali Gol, 2013).

Marital satisfaction is a feeling of enjoyment experienced by a man or woman when they think about all aspects of their marriage. Women's problems in the family are important, not only from an individual and family perspective, but also from a social perspective. Women comprise half of the population with undeniable effect in the

development and growth of society. On the other hand, the prevalence of infertility in Iran is a subject that needs a lot of research because about a quarter of Iranian spouses' experience primary infertility during their married life (Jafarian 2016, Latifian 2016, Peyvasteh gar, 2016, Sepahvand, 2017, Cheraghali Gol, 2013).

In this study, domestic violence was investigated in relation to other variables. Husbands' violence against their wives is one of the main obstacles to family's health. This is because the relationship between men and women are the central pillars whose family sustainability depends on. Given that women are responsible for upbringing the next generation, they must be placed in an environment of peace and respect. Accordingly, it is very important to identify the effected factors in the family about violence against women. One aspect of domestic violence is a family connection between the victim and the perpetrator of violence, which makes the violence much more disgusting and inhumane. The significant point is that the perpetrator is both the culprit and the one who is supposed to support the woman playing the role of a refugee. Because it is a family crime, society and laws are less concerned about this kind of violence. This type of violence is hidden because it is committed in the most private aspect of individuals' life. This, in turn, enhances and intensifies violence. Because of the strong empathy and emotional support to women, they seek further support in difficult and complicated situations. This is unlike men who prefer to be alone in the face of difficulties (Peyvasteh gar, 2016, Sepahvand, 2017). In addition, perceived social support was investigated in this study (Hamamci, 2005, Bahreinian, 2009).

Another problem with women in society is that they are often less aware of their social and legal rights than men. Undoubtedly, women, like men, enjoy social and civil rights, and gender does not block or restrict their access to such rights (Verhaak, 2005, Soleymani, 2014).

When women's awareness of social, legal, and civil issues is low, they cannot play a prominent role

in their family and social decisions; hence, the level of life satisfaction declines. It is imperative to examine the relationship between marital satisfaction and the two other variables. Decreased satisfaction in women is the main barrier to the transmission of culture, or positive customs and values of the society to the next generations (Latifnejad, 2017, Riahi, 2017).

This study mainly aims to predict domestic violence with regard to marital satisfaction and perceived social support in infertile women. The secondary objectives of the study were to predict domestic violence against women with regard to perceived social support in infertile women, to predict domestic violence against women with regard to marital satisfaction in infertile women.

Methods

Study design and population

The statistical method of this study was descriptive and correlational. This is because the researcher sought to predict and determine the contribution of predictor variables (perceived social support and marital satisfaction) in the estimation and explanation of the criterion variable (domestic violence) against women. Because of multiple predictor variables, the study used regression and non-experimental designs. Regarding the number and the nature of variables, researchers used simple sampling method for data collection. The statistical population of the study included numbers of infertile women referred to Avicenna Infertility Center in 2018. It has also received research and ethical code 96/4956.

Sample size

Tabachnick and Fidel's formula was used to estimate the sample size. There were nine independent variables in this study. The sample size was 122. 150 questionnaires were distributed; however, some questionnaires were not completed. Considering the research objectives and hypotheses, data were collected using domestic violence, perceived social support, and marital satisfaction questionnaires.

Sampling method

Interviewers referred to the selected participants for an interview. At first, they completed a consent form. The interview for any patient was face to face.

In this study, the main domestic violence was violent or aggressive behavior at home. It involved the violent abuse of a spouse or partner. Domestic violence was studied domestic violence against women questionnaire.

Domestic violence against women questionnaire (Haj Yahya, 2002): This questionnaire was adopted from several other questionnaires, including the conflict tactics scale (CTS; Strauss, 1980), psychological maltreatment of women inventory (Tolman, 1990), and so on. The questionnaire consists of 32 items and 4 factors. Likert scale was used for scoring. The total score was obtained from the sum of the scores for each item (min and max scores = 32-96). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient from 60 respondents was 0.97. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was reported to be 0.82 (0.84) (Jafarian, 2015), 0.92 (Latifian, 2016), and 0.87 (Peyvastehgar, 2016).

Social support in this study was defined as the perception that one person is cared for, receives constant help from other people. Most popularly, he/she is part of a supportive social network. These supportive resources can be emotional (e.g., nurturance), informational (e.g., advice), or companionship (e.g., sense of belonging); tangible (e.g., financial assistance) or intangible (e.g., personal advice). Social support can be measured as the perception that one receives constant help, or the degree to which a person is integrated into a social network. In this paper, authors investigated social support by multidimensional scale of perceived social support.

Multidimensional scale of perceived social support (MSPSS; Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet and Farley, 1988): This included 12 items and 3 subscales. It was scored based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from completely disagrees to completely agree. Perceived social support measures also focus on one's cognitive appraisal of the environment and one's level of confidence

regarding the necessary help and support (Brewer, 2008). The sum of scores for each question was (min and max scores = 32-96). Wongpakaran 2001, estimated the Cronbach's alpha coefficient to be 0.81- 0.98 in nonclinical samples and 0.92-0.94 in clinical samples. Brewer, 2008 also reported the internal reliability of this scale using Cronbach's alpha coefficient to be 0.86-0.90 for the subscales and 0.86 for the whole questionnaire. Salami et al. estimated the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the three dimensions of social support received from family, friends, and significant others to be 0.89, 0.86, and 0.82, respectively.

In this study, the meaning of marital satisfaction was the state of mental benefits and costs that perceived of marriage to a particular person. The more married partner enters the person, the more satisfied with the marriage and the less married partner. Likewise, the greater the perceived benefits are, the higher the satisfaction of the marriage and the marriage partner would be. In this study, marital satisfaction is enriched with the scale of marital satisfaction.

Enrich marital satisfaction scale: This questionnaire, developed by Olson, Russell, and (Sprinkel, 1989), is used to evaluate potential problematic contexts and detect the contexts enriching marital relations. Soleimani (1994) prepared a short version of this questionnaire, which contained 47 questions is used in the present study. (Jafarian, 2015), Sepahvand, Rasoulzadeh, Tabatabai, Besharat, and Alahyari found that the questionnaire could distinguish happy and sad couples with a distinction power of 85-90% (Jafarian, 2015). This version consists of 10 subscales scored using a five-point Likert scale. It ranges from strongly agree (Jafarian, 2015) to strongly disagree (Soleimani, 1994). Each item is scored separately. Then, the scores are summed up, resulting in a raw score. This is converted to a standard score in order to represent marital satisfaction. In Olson, Fournier, and Druckman's (1989) report on Enrich scale, Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the subscales of 'idealistic distortion', 'marital satisfaction', 'communication',

'conflict resolution', 'personality dimensions and issues', 'financial management', 'leisure activities', 'sexual relationship', 'offspring and childbearing', 'family and friends', and egalitarian roles were 0.90, 0.81, 0.68, 0.75, 0.73, 0.74, 0.76, 0.48, 0.77, .72, and 0.71, respectively. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the enrich subscales in several studies varied from 0.68 (for egalitarian roles) to 0.86 (for marital satisfaction) with a mean score of 0.79. Soleimani calculated the internal consistency of the test to be 0.93 for long relationships, and 0.95, for short relationships. In their study, reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients by (Cheraghali Gol, 2013) of 0.92 and 0.95, respectively.

Data analysis

In this study, all data analysis was performed using SPSS 22. To achieve the research findings through descriptive analysis of the data, frequency distribution, mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum values were considered. Regarding the inferential statistics, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Durbin-Watson statistic, Pearson correlation coefficient, multivariate correlation coefficient, and simultaneous multivariate regression analysis was run.

The study was approved by the institutional review board with the ethics code: 96/4956 in Avicenna Research Institute. Informed written consent was obtained from all participants before their enrollments in this study.

Results

The study participants encompassed 130 infertile women in Tehran. The average household income was 31450000 rails, with the minimum income of 3000000 rails and maximum income of 65000000 rails.

In this study, the mean age of women was 31.63 (47-23), and the mean age of their husbands was 35.59 (48-26). The mean duration of marriage was 0.50 (2-20 years).

33.3% of women and 31% of their husbands had high school diplomas and lower levels of education, 66.90% of women and 69% of their husbands had

university education. 56.9% were housewives and 43.1% were employed. 41.5% of husbands had freelancing jobs and 58.5% had government jobs.

In this study, participants were asked about separation from their husbands. Only 2.3% of women had seriously considered divorce, and 0.8 of them had taken legal action to separate from their husbands. Mean and standard deviation were used to describe domestic violence against women, as shown in Figure 1.

The mean scores of domestic violence against infertile women ranged from 1.016 for physical violence to 1.166 for psychological violence.

Scoring was performed based on a three-point Likert scale ranging from "1 to 3", and the midpoint of the scale was 1.5. The domestic violence scale contained 32 items. The scores for each item was summed up and divided by the number of questions in the range 1 to 3 points. This was simple to interpret. Accordingly, the mean of the total score for domestic, physical, sexual, economic, and psychological violence against infertile women was below the mean score. A low score on this scale indicates no domestic violence against the respondent.

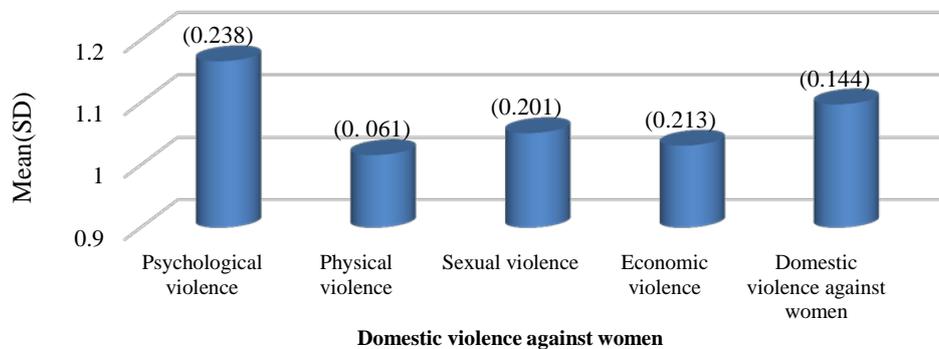


Figure 1. Distribution of Domestic Violence against Infertile Women

According to Figure 2, the mean score of the perceived social support and its dimensions in infertile women ranged from 3.498 for the ‘perceived social support by friends’ to 4.248 for the ‘perceived

social support by family’. Since the scoring was based on a five-point Likert, the midpoint of the scale was 3. Figure 2 shows the mean of perceived social support in infertile women.

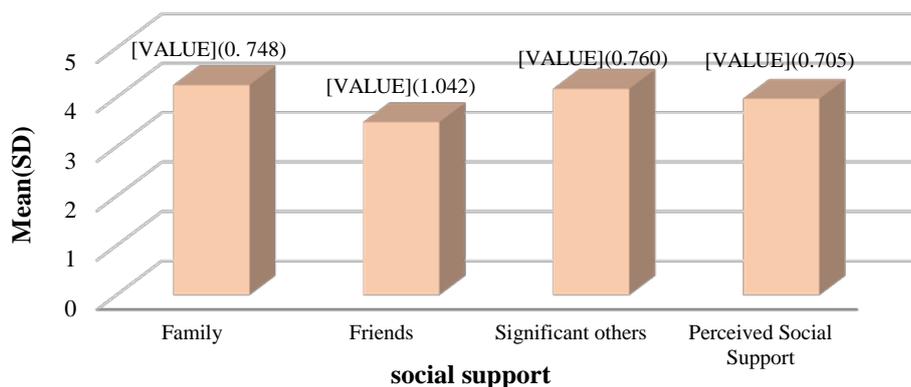


Figure 2. Mean of Perceived Social Support in Infertile Women

The scores of perceived social support and its dimensions were greater than the mean scores. Higher scores indicated acceptable social support

among the participants. Mean and standard deviation were used to describe marital satisfaction in infertile women

In Figure 3, the mean of marital satisfaction in infertile women ranged from 3.551 for the 'idealistic distortion' to 4.36 for the 'connections'. Since the questionnaire was scored based on a five-point Likert scale, the midpoint was 3. The score of each item was summed up and divided by the number of questions in the range 1 to 5. This was simple to interpret. The scores of marital satisfaction and its dimensions were greater than mean scores. Higher scores from this scale

represented an acceptable level of marital satisfaction among participants. Figure 3 demonstrates the mean marital satisfactions in infertile women.

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to investigate the normal distribution of the variables and make decisions on the parametric or nonparametric tests. The results are shown in Table 1.

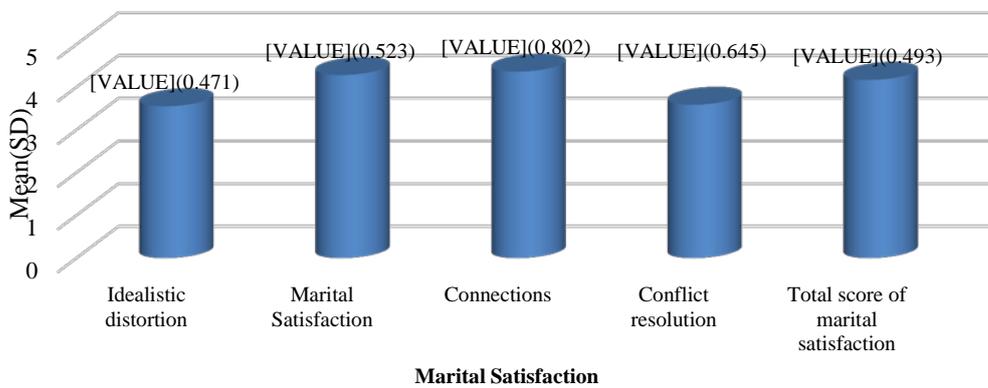


Figure 3. Mean Marital Satisfactions in Infertile Women

Table 1. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Distribution of Variables

Variables	Kolmogorov Smirnov Test	Significance
Psychological violence	1.266	0.064
Physical violence	1.259	0.081
Sexual violence	1.155	0.108
Economic violence	1.273	0.057
Domestic violence against women	1.150	0.109
Family	1.264	0.071
Friends	1.216	0.096
Significant others	1.144	0.112
Perceived social support	0.959	0.317
Idealistic distortion	1.253	0.086
Marital satisfaction	0.744	0.338
Connections	1.214	0.098
Conflict resolution	1.144	0.113
Total score of marital satisfaction	1.210	0.101

The results in Table 1 reveal that the level of significance for Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was "sig > 0.05". This finding suggests that marital satisfaction, perceived social support, and domestic violence against women and their dimensions were not significantly different from a normal distribution in infertile women. The values of

skewness and kurtosis were < 2; hence, parametric tests were used to test the research hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: Perceived social support and marital satisfaction predict domestic violence against infertile women: The distribution of perceived social support, marital satisfaction, and domestic violence in infertile women did not differ

significantly from normal distribution. Therefore, the authors used correlation coefficient, multivariate correlation coefficient, and simultaneous multivariate regression analysis to

test the above mentioned hypothesis.

Table 2 shows the correlation between social support and marital satisfaction, and domestic violence.

Table 2. Correlation between Social Support and Marital Satisfaction, and Domestic Violence

Marital satisfaction	Correlation	Domestic violence Squared correlation	Significance
Perceived social support	-0.622	0.356	0.001
Social support and marital satisfaction	-0.255	0.065	0.003

The correlation coefficients were -0.255, -0.622, "-0.623, and 0.623 for the relationships between perceived social support and domestic violence against infertile women, marital satisfaction and

domestic violence, and the combination of these two variables, respectively. In fact, the two variables could predict 0.388 (38.8%) of the variance. The correlation results are represented below.

Table 3. ANOVA of Regression Sum of Squares

Effects	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Mean square	F	Significance	Durbin Watson statistics
Regression	1.034	2	0.517	40.192	0.001	
Residuals	1.634	127	0.013			1.930
Total	2.668	129				

The ANOVA of the regression sum of squares are shown in Table 3. $P < 0.001$, $F(2, 127) = 40.192$; hence, domestic violence can be predicted by perceived social support and marital satisfaction in

infertile women (significance = < 0.05). The Durbin Watson test value was 1.930 (i.e. > 1.5 and < 2.5), indicating that residuals are independent. The following table presents regression analysis results.

Table 4. Regression Analysis of the Effect of Perceived Social Support and Marital Satisfaction on Domestic Violence

Variables	Coefficients	Error	Standard coefficients	T	Significance
Fixed	1.859	0.089		20.954	0.001
Perceived social support	-0.003	0.015	-0.016	-0.218	0.828
Marital satisfaction	-0.180	0.022	-0.616	-8.177	0.001

Marital satisfaction has a significant effect on domestic violence against infertile women. The negative coefficient indicates that the higher the marital satisfaction is, the less the domestic violence against infertile women would be. Perceived social support had no significant effect on prediction of domestic violence against infertile women.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived social support predicts domestic violence against infertile women: Pearson correlation coefficient and regression analysis were used to test this hypothesis. This is because

variables were quantified, and no violation of normality was observed. The coefficient of correlation between perceived social support and domestic violence against infertile women was -0.255. In other words, the perceived social support could predict 0.065 of variances in domestic violence against women. The Durbin Watson test value was 1.867 (i.e. > 1.5 and < 2.5), indicating that the residuals are independent. (Correlation = -0.255, squared correlation = 0.065, estimation error = 0.13959, Durbin Watson statistics = 867.1)

Table 5. Regression Analysis of the Effect of Perceived Social Support on Domestic Violence

Variables	Coefficients	Error	Standard coefficients	T	Significance
Fixed	1.304	0.070		18.533	0.001
Perceived social support	-.052	0.017	-0.255	-2.987	0.003

As shown in Table 5, perceived social support has a significant effect on domestic violence against infertile women. The negative coefficient indicates that the higher the perceived social support is, the less the domestic violence against infertile women would be.

Hypothesis 3: Marital satisfaction predicts domestic violence against infertile women: Pearson correlation coefficient and regression analysis were used to test this hypothesis. This was because the variables are quantitative and no

violation of normality was observed. The coefficient of correlation between marital satisfaction and domestic violence against infertile women was -0.622. In fact, marital satisfaction could predict 0.356 of variances in domestic violence against women. Durbin Watson test value was 1.741 (i.e. >1.5 and <2.5), suggesting that the residuals are independent. (Correlation=-0.622, squared correlation=0.356, estimation error=0.11300, Durbin Watson statistics=1.741)

Table 6. Regression Analysis of the Effect of Marital Satisfaction on Domestic Violence

Variables	Coefficients	Error	Standard coefficients	T	Significance
Fixed	1.853	0.085		21.901	0.001
Marital Satisfaction	-0.181	0.020	0.622	-8.997	0.001

In Table 6, marital satisfaction has a significant effect on domestic violence against infertile women. The negative coefficient indicates that the higher marital satisfaction is, the less would be the domestic violence against infertile women.

Discussion

According to the findings, experts can predict domestic violence by perceived social support and marital satisfaction in infertile women. With regard to the regression analysis results, marital satisfaction had a significant effect on domestic violence against infertile women. In other words, the higher the marital satisfaction is, the less domestic violence against infertile women would be. Moreover, perceived social support had no significant effect on predicting domestic violence against infertile women. The findings of this study are in agreement with the findings of other studies (Zabihi righeshmeh, 2011, Hatamlavi, 2012). It should be noted that studies were heterogeneous regarding objectives and methodology; however, a majority of these studies compared perceived social support, marital satisfaction, and domestic violence in fertile

and infertile women. Some studies revealed no significant difference between the two groups; but, most studies on fertile and infertile women acknowledge that perceived social support and marital satisfaction reduce domestic violence against women. According to the results of these studies, indices of marital relationship quality and personal beliefs of couples can play a significant role in the adaptation of infertile women. The psychosocial features of infertile couples to make them more adapted towards infertility and improve their mental health status are of utmost importance. This is while, social stress, anxiety, feeling of guilt, and hopelessness in life cause serious damages to marital satisfaction.

The Pearson correlation results demonstrated a meaningful and negative relationship between perceived social support and domestic violence against women ($r = -0.255$, $p < 0.05$). The regression sum of squares revealed that perceived social support in infertile women could predict domestic violence. According to the regression analysis results, the perceived social support had a

significant effect on domestic violence against infertile women. The higher the perceived social support is, the less the domestic violence would be against infertile women. Hence, the research hypothesis was confirmed. The effect of perceived social support on reducing domestic violence against women was 0.065. This was confirmed by other studies (Jafarian, 2016, Latifian, 2016). In one study on domestic violence against wives, Klomega 2008 found that higher level of education, economic status, and income of women as well as their better jobs and occupations cause less violence from their husbands. In fact, regarding relationships and the type of bonds, which are considered social capital, individuals can use perceived supportive and social resources to address their needs. Newman et al. note that social support has a direct impact on individuals' physical complaints. Those with high social support are less vulnerable to illness, even in the case of an accident. Social support could reduce heart diseases, hypertension, nervous headaches, gastrointestinal disorders, and so on. Furthermore, it would also increase self-esteem and self-confidence. Salami, 2006 believes that those with higher social support enjoy a better life quality and health status.

People's involvement in various social networks such as friendship and family networks and neighborhood communications provides support and resources. So, individuals with higher involvement in these networks would subsequently enjoy better health and life quality.

The correlation between marital satisfaction and domestic violence against women in infertile women was - 0.622. In other words, marital satisfaction could predict domestic violence against women by 0.356 (35.6%). According to the regression analysis results, marital satisfaction had a significant effect on domestic violence against infertile women. The higher the marital satisfaction is, the less the domestic violence against women would be. Therefore, the research hypothesis is confirmed. The findings of this study are similar to another study in this field

(Aykuz, 2014, [Ozturk, 2017](#), Aliverdi niya, 2013). Bernstein considers participation in conflict resolution, opinion sharing, and consensus a major factor affecting marital satisfaction. Conflicts are inevitable in marriage, and the important point for couples is to be able to deal with them and resolve them. They should not be afraid of conflicts or make them problems (Jafarian, 2016, Latifian, 2016, Soleymani, 2014).

Most of the arguments regarding women are about lack of conversation, sympathy, and sexual relations of men. In fact, women need more psychological intimacy and men request more sexual intimacy (Latifian 2016, Soleymani 2014).

According to previous research, sexual issues are one of major issues in married life, and sexual consistency and satisfaction are among the main factors leading to marital happiness. Unless such relationships are satisfactory and complete, they might lead to a lot of discomfort, disagreement, and even family disintegration. If infertility in marital life does not affect men's needs, it does not reduce marital satisfaction and does not lead to violence (Latifnejad, 2017, Riahi, 2017).

Findings of this study should be applied with some caution. This is because some intervening variables such as personality factors, sexual satisfaction, sexual activity, women's coping styles, men's cultural and societal backgrounds, social acceptance, family's coping strategies, and stressors affecting men's behavior and violence were not included in this study. This study was also limited to infertile women visiting Avicenna Center for Infertility in Tehran.

Conclusion

The findings of this study confirmed the role of perceived social support and marital satisfaction in predicting domestic violence against infertile women in Tehran. Therefore, the role of domestic violence against infertile women in social policymaking interventions should be considered. The researchers suggest counseling to educate infertile women. It is to help them manage failures and cope with problems. Counseling also makes

them aware of the role of sexual relationships, excitement, and intimacy regarding enhancing their husband's support, marital satisfaction, and nonviolent behaviors.

Conflict of Interest

Authors declared no conflict of interest.

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Authors' contribution

Conceptualization, S.H.; methodology, S.H., B.Gh., M.SH.; formal analysis, S.H., Z.S.; investigation, S.H., B.Gh., M.SH., Z.H.; writing, reviewing, and editing, S.H., B.Gh., M.SH., Z.H.; supervision, B.Gh.; writing, original draft, Z.S. All authors read and approved the final manuscript and are responsible for any question related to the paper.

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