



Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences Section – 2009

I4 Domestic Violence and Woman Shelter Houses: A Cross-Sectional Study From Turkey

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After attending this presentation, attendees will understand Turkish legislative regulations for domestic violence cases, the role of the forensic medicine specialists' as physical, gynecological, and psychiatric examinations in the domestic violence cases and woman shelter houses, and coping mechanisms in domestic violence cases.

This presentation will impact the forensic community by providing understanding about the coping mechanisms and woman shelter houses in Turkey.

Domestic violence is a global public health problem all over the world. Forensic scientists have a mandatory duty to participate in these cases. These duties vary from physical, gynecological, or mental examinations, to the autopsy. Many countries have prevention programs against domestic violence or attempt to minimize physical or mental damage to the victim. The Republic of Turkey administers legislative regulations and provides for women's shelters, comprehensive crisis intervention centers, and other measures.

In the presented study, the impact of perception, regarding social support and coping strategies, on the psychological health of women staying in domestic violence shelters was examined. Two different sets of women are compared with respect to their coping mechanisms, their perception of social supports, and their psychological health. The sample size of the research was 107 women, of whom 53 resided in domestic violence shelters and the remainder formed the control group. Participants were given a survey involving tests such as Ways of Coping Inventory (WOC), Multidimensional Perceived Social Support Inventory (MPSSI), Symptom Check List (SCL90-R), questions concerning their violent experiences, and demographic details.

Women staying in domestic violence shelters were found to have significantly higher WOC and SCL-90-R scores, and lower MPSSI scores, when compared to the control group. Emotion focused coping strategies of women staying in shelters, and subscales of SCL-90-R, such as anxiety, depression, and inter-personal sensitivity were found to be related to each other. No significant differences were found in the MPSSI between two different Friend Support, two different Family Support (both top and bottom values), and two different A Special Person score with respect to SCL-90-R subtest scores. No significant relation was found between their perceived social supports, violent experiences, and utilized coping mechanisms. However, a considerable difference was found between the women's violent experiences before marriage and SCL-90-R interpersonal sensitivity and additional items subscales.

In this presentation Turkish legislative domestic violence regulations, system of shelter services, and victim impact of the shelter houses will be introduced.

Domestic Violence, Coping Mechanism, Turkey