Reviewer's report

Title: The Prevalence of Exposure to Domestic Violence and the Factors Influencing the Progression from Psychological to Physical Violence: a Sample from Primary Care Patients

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Reviewer: Bosiljka Djikanovic

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

Authors invested considerable efforts in improving the manuscript, and they succeeded in it, at certain extent. However, there are some methodological issues which still have to be addressed. There are two critical things which need to be carefully addressed throughout the manuscript:

(1) I strongly suggest authors to be gender-sensitive, not gender-biased, when they are studying phenomenon such as domestic violence (DV). The value of your study is that you have randomly approached to both female and male patients, in primary healthcare settings. You can make substantial findings from just looking and comparing the patterns of female and male experience with domestic violence. Domestic violence is qualitatively different phenomenon for man and women, with different origin, genesis, and dynamics. It is especially relevant for murder, as homicide and femicide in the context of domestic violence are two completely different things. Therefore, separate models are needed, for men and women, and please do not treat gender as just one of the independent variables (it is OK for one table, but then certainly data have to be segregated). Gender is the single MOST important variable, factor associated with DV. Separate models are needed to be built for women and men, and than their findings (univariate and multivariate regression models compared and elaborated), such as frequencies of different types of violence, common perpetrators, factors associated with that experience, etc. These findings, correctly presented, would make the biggest contribution to the importance of the paper, and will be substantial basis for an interesting discussion.

(2) The method you have used (cross-sectional study, not longitudinal one); the questions you posed in order to retrieve exposure to both physical and psychological domestic violence (one single question for each, no scales i.e. set of behaviorally-specific items), and additional question on which type of violence came first, are not sufficient to conclude on “progression from psychological to physical violence”. I suggest authors to avoid this way of elaborating data, as it is methodologically unsound. Alternatively, you might consider and elaborate on different types of associations with outcomes (just physical violence, both physical and psychological, perpetrators, etc) and come up with a plenty of valuable comparisons (some of ideas are already presented under the first point).
Therefore, I strongly suggest authors to rewrite Results part and Discussion according to these comments.

Abstract

Background: “a special group of primary care patients” is not a common expression, please consider changing this.

Method: As noted above, please consider omitting to report on progression from psychological to physical violence, especially concluding on the “influence”, which might be, in the best case, association, but not causal-consequence relationship. This applied to the last sentence in the method as well.

Results: please segregate data from the very beginning (from the first sentence) for male and female. I suggest reporting just percentages, for easier comparisons. The last sentence in the method should be omitted as well.

Conclusions: have to be rewritten accordingly.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.