

## Mental Health and Resilience in Women Victims of Domestic Violence

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### ABSTRACT

Domestic violence against women has become an open secret. There are so many women who experience violence that causes various losses both physical, psychological and financial. The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of domestic violence on women on mental health and resilience. The method used in this study is qualitative with 3 participants. Based on the results of the study, it was found that all participants experienced physical, verbal and sexual violence that affected their resilience. The participants took longer to recover from the trauma and pain of violence from their partners. Social support plays an important role in helping women victims of violence to recover and seek help. An interesting condition of the participants was their financial dependence on their husbands. This makes the husband feel more powerful and does not respect the wife. In addition, the low level of education causes them to lack understanding of the existence of laws that protect them from violence and difficulty seeking help on their own.

**Keywords:** domestic, female, mental, resilience, violence

### INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence against women is also called domestic violence (KDRT). This behavior includes all forms of actions that have the potential to result in physical, emotional, sexual and economic harm to women.<sup>1</sup> Acts of violence can be committed by husbands, spouses, former spouses, family

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<sup>1</sup> Cecilia Angelica H, "Gambaran Kasus Korban Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga (KDRT) Di RSUD Dr. Pirngadi Kota Medan Tahun 2023," 2024, <https://repository.uhn.ac.id/handle/123456789/10220>.



members or people who live in the same house with women. This act is a form of violation of Human Rights (HAM).<sup>2</sup> The culture of Indonesian society which is majority patriarchal positions women as subordinates of men. Men are synonymous with power and power, while women are synonymous with meek and domestic work.

Women should be aware of the forms of domestic violence in order to protect themselves and seek help. Physical violence usually takes the form of hitting, kicking, strangling and burning. Meanwhile, emotional violence is more in the form of intimidation, manipulation, isolation, bullying and threats. Other forms of violence that women often experience are sexual such as forced sexual relations, sexual harassment and sexual slavery. Other forms that sometimes go unnoticed are economic violence in the form of financial control, prohibiting work and seizing property owned by women.<sup>3</sup>

The biggest problem with domestic violence against women is the stigma that prevents their cases from being exposed. This is evident from the 2018 Basic Health Research (Riskesdas) data which states that 1 in 3 women aged 16-64 years have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their partners. This data is supported by Komnas Perempuan research in 2022 which found 338,496 cases of domestic violence occurred in Indonesia, of which 88.7% of these cases occurred in those with wife status.

Violence against women is triggered by various interrelated factors. The problem of gender gap is still the main cause. Women are considered to have a lower degree than men.<sup>4</sup> We still find this view in many Indonesian societies that adhere to patriarchy. This culture has the potential to cause violence against women to be tolerated and tolerated. The stigma attached to women as individuals who must obey men, especially husbands, makes domestic violence cases hidden a lot.<sup>5</sup> Women become more vulnerable to violence and find it difficult to seek help. Husbands are most emotionally difficult because of stress problems and frustration due to family economics. The feeling of superiority of the husband as

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<sup>2</sup> Anwar Hidayat, "Kekerasan Terhadap Anak Dan Perempuan," *AL-MURABBI: Jurnal Studi Kependidikan Dan Keislaman* 8, no. 1 (2021): 22–33.

<sup>3</sup> World Health Organization (WHO), *Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018: Global, Regional and National Prevalence Estimates for Intimate Partner Violence against Women and Global and Regional Prevalence Estimates for Non-Partner Sexual Violence against Women* (World Health Organization, 2021), <https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=8sVqEAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR6&dq=violence+against+women&ots=bbiQva-se9&sig=2NH9ZHLgQwjgZqwqqYErfe7Rik>.

<sup>4</sup> Irma Irma, "Kesehatan Mental Perempuan," 2023, 306.

<sup>5</sup> Nurlina Subair et al., "Livelihood Strategies for Widows and Divorcees of Coastal Fishers in Indonesia," *ETNOSIA: Jurnal Etnografi Indonesia* 8, no. 1 (2023): 12–23.

the breadwinner often makes them assume the wife must always understand their condition. Including if emotions due to work problems to violence occur, women are required to understand and tolerate this. Not only that, discrimination due to race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation also triggers violence against women.

Discrimination against women hinders access to services and support. As a result, they are afraid to ask for help. Women who experience domestic violence themselves make them feel discriminated against. Psychologically, discrimination makes women feel inferior and unappreciated. As a result, they are vulnerable to depression, anxiety and trauma. Fear and anxiety about personal safety ultimately further complicate the situation.<sup>6</sup> Support and help are difficult to get because they feel ashamed and isolated from society. Discrimination, domestic violence and vulnerability become labyrinths that torment women.

Previous studies have found that female survivors of violence, especially sexual violence, experience symptoms of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) Some symptoms that arise such as flashbacks, sleep disturbances and emotional detachment. Supporting this, another study from Kurniawan et al (2018) states that the experience of violence has a close relationship with the appearance of trauma symptoms.<sup>7</sup> In Schaefer's literature study, L. M et al (2021) stated that alternative prevention of violence against women can be done by increasing the socialization program for protection of women in the form of seminars, infographics and social media. She also suggested establishing more integrated service centers to serve as a place for women in need of protection.<sup>8</sup>

Women's knowledge of domestic violence and how to get help play an important role in the success of self-protection efforts. The reality is that there are still many women who have unconsciously experienced violence and have an impact on their mental health. Research focusing on women's resilience to domestic violence is also scant. Therefore, this study aims to understand the impact of domestic violence on women's mental health and resilience.

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<sup>6</sup> Gautam Gulati and Brendan D. Kelly, "Domestic Violence against Women and the COVID-19 Pandemic: What Is the Role of Psychiatry?," *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry* 71 (2020): 101594; Ahmad Syaekhu and Deti Junita Sulanjari, "Risiko Pernikahan Dini Terhadap Kehidupan Sosial Keluarga," *Journal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat Saiverigading* 1, no. 2 (2022): 58–69.

<sup>7</sup> Yudi Kurniawan et al., "Pelatihan Dukungan Psikologis Awal Untuk Meningkatkan Kemampuan Asesmen Kasus Pada Pendamping Korban Kekerasan Di Kota Semarang," *SAFARI: Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat Indonesia* 3, no. 3 (2023): 86–101.

<sup>8</sup> Lauren M. Schaefer et al., "The Road to Resilience: Strength and Coping Among Pregnant Women Exposed to Intimate Partner Violence," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 36, no. 17–18 (September 2021): 8382–8408, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260519850538>.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses qualitative methods to understand the problem of domestic violence against women. In this study, the data obtained were presented in detail and there was no intervention whatsoever. This study focuses on looking at the incidence of violence experienced by women in the household and the impact on their mental health and resilience. The criteria for participants in this study were women who had experienced domestic violence for at least 1 year. There were 3 participants involved in this study who were wives and widows when violence occurred. The informant selected was 1 companion from the three cases of the participants. This informant became a place to tell the participants about their cases. This research was conducted for 2 months from November – December 2023 in Mamuju Regency, West Sulawesi Province.

Data analysis techniques using the Miles and Huberman Model are carried out by reviewing the collected data and then mapping it into a matrix to see the causal relationship of the phenomenon of violence in women.<sup>9</sup> The validity and reliability of the research using the data triangulation method, namely the use of 2 sources to get a comprehensive picture of domestic violence experienced by women.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to determine the impact of domestic violence on women's mental health and resilience. Mental health is an action that causes harm both to the physical, psychological and economic women.<sup>10</sup> Acts of violence cause a variety of trauma and prolonged stress. Violence can even cause mental damage per harvest.<sup>11</sup> Women's ability to bounce back from difficult situations and return to normal is also very influential. Those who are abused feel worthless and inferior. As a result, they see life as meaningless and choose to accept that fate.<sup>12</sup> This study uses qualitative methods to obtain a comprehensive picture of the mental health condition and resilience of women who have experienced violence.

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<sup>9</sup> Anjarima Devitri Kase, Dwi Sarwindah Sukiatni, and Rahma Kusumandari, "Resiliensi Remaja Korban Kekerasan Seksual Di Kabupaten Timor Tengah Selatan: Analisis Model Miles Dan Huberman," *INNER: Journal of Psychological Research* 3, no. 2 (2023): 301–11.

<sup>10</sup> Irma, "Kesehatan Mental Perempuan."

<sup>11</sup> Odette R. Sánchez et al., "Violence against Women during the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Integrative Review," *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics* 151, no. 2 (November 2020): 180–87, <https://doi.org/10.1002/ijgo.13365>.

<sup>12</sup> Gulati and Kelly, "Domestic Violence against Women and the COVID-19 Pandemic."

The results of interviews conducted on 3 participants showed psychosomatic symptoms or physical disorders due to psychological problems due to violence committed by partners. All three respondents experienced physical, verbal, psychological, sexual and financial violence. In general, participant profiles can be seen in the following table

Table 1. Data Partisipant

<b>Participant Initials</b>	<b>Data Parisipant</b>
<i>Education</i>	
1	Graduated from junior high school
2	Graduated from elementary school
3	Diploma
<i>Marital Status</i>	
1	Marry
2	Divorce
3	Marry
<i>Income</i>	
1	No face-to-face income per month
2	No face-to-face income per month
3	Have a fixed income per month

Data Source: 2023

The violence that participants get results in stress, unstable emotional insecurity, fear and hatred in partners. They need a long time to recuperate. Support from family, friends and colleagues plays an important role in their recovery process.<sup>13,14</sup> They must regain their confidence through trust-based relationships and develop themselves as supporters of participants' resilience.

<sup>13</sup> Ayu Sri Wahyuni and Andi Kamal M. Sallo, "Dukungan Keluarga Dan Kualitas Hidup Penderita Kanker Payudara," *Journal Of Midwifery And Nursing Studies* 4, no. 2 (2022).

<sup>14</sup> Irma Irma et al., "Literasi Sadari Pada Perempuan Kota Di Masyarakat Marginal," *Jurnal Sehat Mandiri* 18, no. 2 (December 31, 2023): 174–91, <https://doi.org/10.33761/jsm.v18i2.1218>.

The first participants until the time this study was conducted were still with their partners. She has many fears including being beaten again if she asks for a divorce and her son becomes a victim of her husband's anger. However, the first participants began to open up to learn to deal with their husbands so as not to hit them. She began to build good communication with her husband and focused on taking care of the house and children. The second participant had chosen to divorce, but had not dared to remarry after 3 years of separation from her husband. The third participant took a long time to decide to remarry after divorcing from her abusive ex-husband.

All three respondents were traumatized by the violence they received. Physical violence such as molestation, fertilization and sexual assault inflicts lasting physical injuries and pain. This makes the victims feel fear, excessive anxiety and stress. Meanwhile, emotional violence undermines women's self-esteem and self-confidence. As a result they become ashamed, feel alone and helpless. The impact of violence from psychological aspects is quite diverse, there are those who experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and major depressive disorder (MDD). As a result, symptoms such as flashbacks, nightmares, insomnia, sensitivity and withdrawal from social interaction arise. Repeated trauma due to abusive relationships can further exacerbate the trauma and prolong its effects. This is what makes women feel trapped and have no hope of getting out of the situation of violence.

There is one condition that the first and second participants have in common is that they are completely financially dependent on their partner. The husband who realizes this feels that he has more power than his wife. As a result, the husband has less respect for the wife. When something triggers emotions, husbands are more prone to violence. In addition, both participants also had an inadequate level of education. Their knowledge of laws related to domestic violence is also minimal. As a result, both participants had difficulty seeking help on their own.

Table 1. Interview Results on Domestic Violence

Participants		
I	II	III
The first participants experienced verbal, physical and sexual abuse. Husband often curses her if the bed is not tidy. Physical violence often occurs in sexual relations , the husband has the imagination of having sexual intercourse while tying his wife's hands. If the wife refuses to serve her husband for menstrual reasons, the husband will still insist on serving her. As a result, the wife often feels uncomfortable in her female area.	The second participant was mentally abused because her husband had other options for women. This affair occurred to produce two children. The wife learned about this from the neighborhood woman who came to her and made a confession that she had a serial marriage with her husband. In addition, she also experienced economic violence because her husband did not provide her with enough bread. As a result, the wife often owes money to parents to provide for her and the children.	A third participant experienced sexual violence by being forced to take stimulants and erotic dancing. The husband even forced the wife to hook up in front of the husband's male friend.

Data Source:2023

Some of the factors that influence trauma in women who experience violence are: first, a history of past trauma such as sexual abuse or fertilization, it is easier to experience more severe re-trauma in the future. This happens because previous trauma has made him more sensitive to conditions reminiscent of previous trauma. Secondly there was no support from family, friends and the community who helped with their recovery. Social support from the closest people can reduce their anxiety. By talking and sharing their fears and anxieties with family or friends, the mind becomes calmer. Third, women who experience violence fear being labeled wrong by society. The culture of a society that

considers women "immoral" or "provocative" puts them to shame. This inherent stigma eventually prevents them from getting help.

Table 2 Interview Results on Resilience

<b>Participants</b>		
I	II	III
<p>"My best friend is a lawyer, she is with me in dealing with the problem of violence with my husband"</p>	<p>J'ai (compagnon et soutien spirituel) « Ma sœur m'a emmenée rencontrer des gens du bureau de l'autonomisation des femmes pour obtenir une assistance juridique. J'aime aussi rencontrer de bonnes personnes qui m'apprennent beaucoup de choses.</p>	<p>I have (support of religious leaders) "I got support from the ustadzah IQM. He taught me to be sincere to Allah's decrees but still fight for my rights."</p>
<p>I can (have efforts to improve economists and a positive mindset) "when I know I can't depend on my husband. He used more money to buy drinks, so I started selling online to support myself. Moreover, my son is also in school, that's what makes me excited to work."</p>	<p>I can (positive mindset) "I need time to clear my mind. At first I doubted I could live without my husband. I am also afraid of legal affairs because I have no knowledge. But I tried to be brave enough to take care of the divorce."</p>	<p>I can (communication skills and business skills) "Since I was a girl, I really liked to sell. After marriage, my husband forbade me because he wanted his wife to stay at home. But because he often hurts, I am reluctant to accept his money. So I started selling again.</p>

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<p>I am (positive self-concept) "I am very grateful to be able to go through a lot with the child. I continue to work hard to find them halal money. My children are also not only demanding and always help me. Sometimes they also tell me about my father's behavior."</p>	<p>I am (feeling worthwhile) "I am an only child who is very dear to my parents. If the parents who gave birth and cared for me didn't hurt me, then no one else had the right to hurt me either."</p>	<p>I am (positive self-concept) "When my husband asked me to be weird and forced to take stimulant drugs, I felt very unworthy of being treated like that. Even in front of others, he treated me indecently. Therefore I began to consciously seek to find a way away from that person because I wanted to be appreciated."</p>
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Data Source:2023

Violence experienced by women has a significant impact on their resilience. Resilience is a person's ability to recover from a downturn and adapt to changes that occur.<sup>15</sup> In the case of violence against women, the persecution they experience physically, psychologically and economically makes them feel worthless and afraid.<sup>16</sup> As a result, their self-confidence and self-esteem decrease, making it difficult to face difficult situations. In addition, mental trauma due to violence increases stress, anxiety and depression.<sup>17</sup> As a result, women find it difficult to concentrate, tasks become neglected and physically they become more vulnerable to illness. Those who are victims of violence need support from the surrounding environment in order to get out of the devastating situation.

Research from Kurniawan et al (2018) shows that social support is proven to increase the resilience of women survivors of domestic violence.<sup>18,19</sup> Another

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<sup>15</sup> Lia Aulia Fachrial and Kinanthi Herdiningtyas, "Pengaruh Self Compassion Terhadap Resiliensi Pada Remaja Yang Memiliki Orang Tua Tunggal," *Jurnal Kesehatan Dan Kedokteran* 2, no. 3 (2023): 25–31.

<sup>16</sup> Esa Hanna Kalila, "The Relationship between Social Support and Resilience in Victims of Dating Violence" (PhD Thesis, Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya, 2022), <http://repository.untag-sby.ac.id/id/eprint/18314>.

<sup>17</sup> Abdur Rahman et al., "Peningkatan Resiliensi Psikologis Penyintas Kekerasan Rumah Tangga Melalui Psikoterapi Positif," *Psyche 165 Journal*, 2022, 158–63.

<sup>18</sup> Yudi Kurniawan, Fuad Nashori, and Indahria Sulistyarini, "Terapi Kelompok Pendukung Untuk Meningkatkan Resiliensi Pada Ibu Yang Memiliki Anak Talasemia," *Sympathic: Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi* 6, no. 1 (2019): 31–40.

<sup>19</sup> Ahmad Syaekhu, Sri Handayani, and Irma Irma, "Development Model of Participatory-Based Demographic Control in Marginalized Communities," *Jurnal Administrasi* 9, no. 2 (October 5, 2022): 361–70, <https://doi.org/10.26858/ja.v9i2.37475>.

study conducted by Bakaitye et al (2022) suggests that some women survivors of domestic violence have positive growth personalities.<sup>20,21</sup> This personality profile encourages victims of domestic violence to increase their resilience through the formation of a positive self-concept and open to accepting the help of others. Relevant to this, the study found that the three participants in this study felt suffering as a result of violence committed by their partners. The violence made participants feel stressed, worthless and ashamed. The second participant was depressed to the point of wanting to attempt suicide. A third participant felt hatred for men who were unmarried when the study was conducted. The first participant had difficulty orgasming during intercourse with her second husband. He always feels uncomfortable due to trauma in the past.

## CONCLUSION

Domestic violence that occurs against women can occur physically, verbally, sexually and financially. This form of violence can be triggered due to economic problems, abnormal sexual imagination and sexual intercourse by the couple. Domestic violence traumatizes women and affects their resilience. Pain that occurs repeatedly and over a long period of time makes women feel insecure, ashamed, isolated and discriminated against. Support from families helps victims of domestic violence seek help. Most of them need time to recover themselves. Deep trauma makes some of them prefer to live alone with their children. Resilience in the three participants is interpreted as a long process that they must face to achieve a prosperous mental state again. The difficulties faced by participants became lighter when getting support from family, friends and colleagues. The participants' adaptive coping strategies got them up and started new, happier lives.

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<sup>20</sup> Aistė Bakaitytė, Goda Kaniušonytė, and Rita Žukauskienė, "Posttraumatic Growth, Centrality of Event, Trauma Symptoms and Resilience: Profiles of Women Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence," *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 37, no. 21–22 (November 2022): NP20168–89, <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605211050110>.

<sup>21</sup> Mirnawati Mirnawati et al., "Buku Abstrak Seminar Nasional Sains, Teknologi, Dan Sosial Humaniora Universitas Indonesia Timur 2019," in *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Universitas Indonesia Timur*, vol. 1, 2019, <https://jurnal.uit.ac.id/SemNas/article/view/619>.

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