Prevalence of Spouse Aggression in Hong Kong

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The present study explored the extent of spouse aggression in Chinese families in Hong Kong. Subjects were 246 female and 136 male undergraduate students who reported on the various forms of interparental aggression and violence. About 75% of the subjects reported interparental verbal or symbolic aggression and 14% indicated the use of physical violence between parents. In general, compared to mothers, fathers engaged in more verbal aggression against their spouses. Mothers were as likely as fathers to use actual physical force toward their spouses. Interverbal responses to family conflicts did not vary with children's gender except that female subjects observed that fathers reasoned less but engaged in more insulting, throwing, smashing, hitting, or kicking things than mothers.

KEY WORDS: spouse aggression; Hong Kong families; prevalence.

INTRODUCTION

Family violence has received increasing attention over the past two decades, and is recognized as an important fact of life in almost all societies and cultures (Campbell, 1992; Levinson, 1989; The Global Fund for Women & Shaler Adams Foundation, 1992). Studies on the prevalence rate of spouse aggression are few for Asian countries and are mainly on wife abuse. From the resource guide prepared by the Global Fund for Women and Shaler Foundation in 1992, 8,906 women were reported to have been killed in dowry-related incidents in India in 1987. Ninety nine percent of the housewives and 77% of women workers in Pakistan were also beaten by their husbands in the same year. Campbell (1992) also documented pres-

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