RESUMEN. Objetivo: Caracterizar el conocimiento y exposición a violencia de los padres de familia que acuden a un centro de salud del distrito San Martín De Porres en Lima - Perú. Material y Método: Estudio descriptivo de enfoque cuantitativo. Se utilizaron dos cuestionarios; el primero consiste de 20 preguntas, desarrollado por Roque, Valentín y Zurita, que mide el nivel de conocimiento sobre violencia y el cuestionario corto desarrollado por Orue y Calvete para evaluar la exposición a violencia (física, verbal y amenazas) en cuatro contextos: trabajo, casa, calle y televisión. La población estuvo conformada por 200 padres de niños que acudieron a un centro de salud del distrito San Martín De Porres en Lima - Perú, la muestra fue de 132 padres que cumplieron los criterios de inclusión y exclusión. Resultados: 52% tuvieron nivel de conocimiento sobre violencia; 25% alto nivel y 23% bajo nivel; además 47% tuvieron exposición media a violencia; 29% baja exposición y 24% alta exposición. Conclusiones: La mayoría de los padres presentaban nivel de conocimiento medio sobre violencia y exposición media a situaciones violentas.

Palabras clave: Violencia, exposición al riesgo, padres, conocimiento

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INTRODUCTION

The current climate of violence in society often leads us to focus attention on the violence suffered by children or women. Nevertheless, it is necessary to look at those who head the family nucleus, i.e. the parents.1

Violence encompasses two situations: direct exposure, when the person receives some harm; and on the other hand, indirect exposure, when the person is only a visualizer of some kind of violence. Emphasizing violence in the family environment, it is stated that this is not a recent problem; it is even a feature of tolerated family life. In all cases, physical, psychological and/or sexual violence is related to the low level of knowledge on the subject.2-3

It is important to emphasize that violence is behavior that can be learned through direct effort and imitation through observation.4 This explains the consequences of this double causality shown in the statistics that indicate that 50% of families suffer or have suffered some type of violence, being mostly women victims.5

Various studies found in Spain and Peru show that 85% of women and 15% of men suffer violence. Furthermore, 69% of Peruvian children in the departments of San Martin, Iquitos and Cusco suffer violence. This is because households with higher levels of overcrowding or large families are more likely to inflict physical punishment on the child. Reality suggests that mistreatment continues to extend beyond the family, as it includes harm done by omission, suppression or transgression of individual and collective rights and includes complete or partial abandonment; producing harm or potential harm to social health.6-11

In this sense, the family fulfills the function of an affective refuge and social learning; it is the first and most important of the schools, in it you are born, you enjoy it and you discover how beautiful it is to feel that someone is always waiting for you, that your arrival represents joy, that you love and are loved.10 On the contrary, a family with violence affects the members and more the children; who live the consequences of this problem and whose impact can induce problems in the health. Exposure to violence encompasses a wide range of situations, distinguishing two fundamentals; direct exposure (an individual is a direct victim of a violent act) and indirect exposure (an individual is a witness to violent behavior: hitting, pushing, hearing screams, insults, threats, perceiving fear and stress). Thus, demographically in Peru, every fourth out of 10 women between the ages of 15 and 49 years suffered at some time violence from their partners and were forced to have sexual relations, making a total of 240 abused and mistreated women.13-14

Family violence is one of the most serious problems of human rights violations in our country. Therefore, it was decided to conduct the study with the aim of determining the level of knowledge and exposure to family violence of parents who bring their children to growth and development services in a first-level health center in Northern Lima, Peru.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

The study corresponded to the quantitative approach, non-experimental and cross-sectional design, and descriptive level. The population consisted of 200 parents of children attending growth and development services in a first-level health center in Northern Lima.

In order to measure knowledge of family violence, a questionnaire consisting of 20 questions was used as an instrument and to assess exposure to violence, another 21-question questionnaire was used. The instruments are valid and reliable.7,15 The information was processed with the SPSS software and the descriptive statistics were applied.

RESULTS

The questionnaire applied to parents included questions that assessed the level of knowledge about violence that they possessed. The results show that the majority had middle knowledge of the subject.

Table 1.
Level of knowledge about violence held by parents of children under 5 years of age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOWLEDGE OF VIOLENCE</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>52.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, the chart 1 shows the results of the questionnaire applied to parents to qualify their exposure to different types of violence. The highest percentages are the middle exposure to violence at work (64%) and on television (58%). Nevertheless, violence in the street and at home had a high exposure of 27%.

In Table 02, it is observed that 47% had a middle exposure, 29% had a low level and 24% had a high level of exposure to family violence.
DISCUSSION

According to the results of the study, parents have an average knowledge of violence. Although no specific antecedents were found in parents, a study conducted in Lima, found that 45% of all parents had a low level of knowledge about family violence, 29% of middle level, and 26% of high level. These results demonstrate that health professionals have an important area of work in educating families to improve this level of misinformation, this is a widespread opinion in different countries of the world.

It is interesting to add to the lack of knowledge, the exposure to violence that parents have had; thus, faced with the question of whether any member of his/her family ever hit him/her or exercised on him/her some type of violence; it was obtained as a result that 47% of the participating parents had average exposure and 24% of high exposure to family violence. This finding would indicate that participating parents have probably experienced violence during their childhood and as consulted in the literature review; this may influence their future learning and practice of violence. 16 In other words, children who are victims of psychological or physical violence grow up believing that violence is a pattern of normal relationships between adults. 9 Nevertheless, a limitation for the analysis of these results is that statistics on violence for the period of the parents’ childhood are not available.

Finally, work on violence must be multisectoral and interdisciplinary; here, health professionals have in their hands a great opportunity usually in health facilities, to sensitize parents on this issue. Deeper and more generic strategies will contribute to this effort, but access to information is the first thing the population should be able to have.

Conflicts of interests: The authors state that there are no conflicts of interest.
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