

## **Covid-19 Measures and the Exacerbation of Intimate Partner Violence in Calabar**

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### **Abstract**

This study empirically examines the extent to which the Covid 19 has exacerbated intimate partner violence in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey research method was adopted for the study. the purposive and simple random sampling technique was used in selecting 417 participants from Calabar metropolis. The instrument of data collection was the semi-structured self-developed questionnaire. Data collected from the field was analyzed using descriptive and influential statistics at 0.05 level of significance out of the 417 instruments, only 393 was returned and used for analysis. The result from the descriptive analysis revealed that most participants (85%) reported abused during the lockdown. The most common form of abuse was emotional abuse (45.5%). Findings also revealed the rate of abuse was far higher when compared with before the Covid 19 lockdown. From the correlation analysis, result revealed a significant correlation between Covid 19, lockdown and intimate partner violence. The study concludes that COVID 19, the lockdown has significantly increased the incidence of intimate partner violence in Calabar, cross river state. Hence, there is need for the government to include Covid 19 essential services that will focus on intimate partner and other domestic violence response, provide the necessary resource that will make them function properly and identify ways to make them assessable.

**Keyword:** Covid-19, lockdown, intimate partner violence, domestic violence, Calabar

### **Introduction**

Violence against women is a human right violation that is prevalent globally and has a negative effect on the wellbeing of victims, their family as well as the community. Intimate partner violence is the most prevalent form of violence against women (WHO,2013). According to United Nation (2020), 243 million women aged between the ages of 15 and 49 has experienced one form of sexual or physical violence from a spouse or intimate partner in the last 12 months. More than a third of women who are killed intentionally are killed by a spouse or intimate partner violence (Chernet & Cherrie,

2020; Campbell,2020). Data and evidence have shown that intimate partner violence and other forms of violence against women tend to increase during a pandemic, war and other forms of human emergencies (Vora, Malathesh, Das & Chatterjee, 2020; Ukwai., Angioha & Nwagboso, 2018). The novel coronavirus pandemic first reported in Wuhan province, China, December 2019 caused by SAR-Cov-2 virus has become a defining global health issue and the greatest challenge the world has faced since the second world war. Since its emergence in China, the virus has spread to almost all the part of the world. As at 23hrs central African time, 28 July 2020, there was 16,540,137 cases of the coronavirus and 655,300 confirm death as a result of complications from the virus (Worldometers,2020).

The pandemic has become much more than just a global health crisis. It has developed into and has created a devastating social, economic and political effect that has left a scar that will remain long after the pandemic (Gulati & Kelly,2020; Roesch, Amin, Gupta, & Garcia-Moreno,2020). As the world continues to grapple with the pandemic, different government continue to announce measures on how to tackle the spread of the pandemic. The measures have continued to alter the day to day life people. These measures include quarantines, social distancing, isolation, travel restrictions and compulsory stay at home. Although these measures have been effective in checking the spread of SARs -Cov-2 virus yet it has had a profound and devastating effect on financial, social and psychological life of people globally, bringing with it increased unemployment, economic strain, increased alcoholism, post-traumatic stress and continuous increase in domestic violence, especially intimate partners violence (Boserup, Mckenny &Elkhuli,2020; Brooks, webster, Smith, Woodland, Wessely, Greenberg & Rubin,2020).

While there is a dearth in data or reliable estimates on the extent of increase of intimate partner violence as a result of measures to curb the spread of Covid -19. Reports from countries most hit by the pandemic such as China, the United States of America, Britain have shown a spike on the incidence of intimate partner violence (Goddin, 2020). According to Allen -Ebrahimiam (2020), the number of intimate partner violence cases reported to the police in the Chinese city of Hubei triple in February compared to the period a year ago. Information from digital (2020) reported that 87,000 incidences of intimate partner violence and other forms of domestic violence was reported in the first eight days of lockdown during corvid 19. Statistics released by the National Commission of Women, India stated that there has been a 100 per cent increase in complaint as they relate to intimate partner violence since the lockdown was imposed in March 2020. The report by united nation women (2020) warned that women will disproportionately be affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and the pandemic will increase pre-existing risk and vulnerability and will widen gender inequality.

According to the United Nations (2020), attention has been drawn to a surge in a shadow pandemic, domestic violence since the coronavirus pandemic started and the institution of measures such as lockdown, quarantine put in place to curb the spread of the pandemic in Nigeria have helped to instigate this surge. Another United Nation (2020b) document point to a report from 24 states in Nigeria that indicate 346 incidences of sexual violence perpetrated by an intimate partner in march alone and within two weeks of April, the figure had increased by 56 per cent. The Lagos State Domestic and Social Respond Team (2020) reports a threefold increase in domestic violence in the state and these are attributed to lockdown in the state. These incidences have sometimes tragically lead to the death of some of the victims and leave a psychological and physical effect on the lives of survivors and their family members. These study analyses the prevalence and extent to which the novel coronavirus has increased the incidence of intimate partner violence.

## **Materials and Method**

### ***Study Setting***

Calabar Metropolis covers two local government areas in Cross River State. The Metropolis covers an area of 157 square kilometres. The city is sandwiched between two rivers: The Great Kwa River and the Calabar River. The original inhabitants of the area are the Efuts, Quas and the Efiks (Agabo Agba, Ikoh, Bassey & Ushie, 2010; Ukwayi, Angioha & Aniah 2019; Omang, Liu& Eneji, 2013;Ukwayi, Angioha& Ojong-Ejoh, 2018). But because of mass migration as a result of metropolis being the state capital and the location of various industries in the metropolis, other ethnic groups are now found in the area. According to the national population commission (2006) census, the population of the Metropolis 328,877 and has a density of 980 persons per square kilometre. As the capital of cross river, the area pulls a high population of civil servants, and business people, farming and farming remain a major occupation of the people of the area.

### ***Study Method***

The descriptive survey research method was adopted for the study. This method attempts to systematically and accurately describe a situation, population or a phenomenon. The design allows the use of selected units of a population to analyses a large population (Ukwayi, Okpa, Adedoyin, Angioha, & Udom, 2017; Bassey, Abang & Iji, 2017). Applying the descriptive survey method, a pretrial Semi-Structured Self-Developed Questionnaire was used to elicit information from the selected participants in the study area.

### ***Participants***

A sample of 417 was used for the study, the sample size was determined using the Survey Monkey Sample Determined Technique at 95 per cent confidence level and 4.8

per cent margin of error. The samples were randomly selected from a population of women above the age of 20 who were either married or in a serious relationship. the samples were selected using stratified, purposive and simple random sampling technique. Calabar was stratified into two strata, based on the two local government area that makes up the metropolis, Calabar South and Calabar Municipal Council. The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting these wards from each of the three Local Government Area. The wards are Calabar South, ward 12, 11 and 9. Calabar Municipal, ward 2,6, and 8. from these wards 3 communities were selected using purposive sampling technique. The communities selected are highlighted in table 1. from the 3 communities selected, the researcher randomly selected 23 women above the age of 20 from 15 communities and 24 from 3 communities. The criteria for selections was each participant where females, most have been married or in a serious relationship and most have spent the quarantined lockdown period with an intimate partner.

**Table 1**  
**Sample Selection from Calabar**

| S/N | Local Government Area     | Wards | Communities and Sample size |
|-----|---------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|
| 1   | Calabar South             | 9     | Palm street (24)            |
|     |                           |       | Mayne Avenue (23)           |
|     |                           |       | Atu street (23)             |
|     |                           | 11    | Afokang (23)                |
|     |                           |       | New Airport (24)            |
|     |                           |       | Mbukpa (23)                 |
|     |                           | 12    | Ekpo Abasi (23)             |
|     |                           |       | Uwanse (23)                 |
|     |                           |       | Yellow Duke (23)            |
| 2   | Calabar Municipal Council | 2     | Edim Otop (23)              |
|     |                           |       | Abang Asang (23)            |
|     |                           |       | Otu Ansa (23)               |
|     |                           | 6     | Ishie Town (23)             |
|     |                           |       | Akai Effa (24)              |
|     |                           |       | Ikot Eka-Idem (23)          |
|     |                           | 8     | Federal Housing (23)        |
|     |                           |       | Ikot Ansa (23)              |
|     |                           |       | Esuk Utan (23)              |

**Source: Fieldwork, 2020**

***Ethical Consideration***

Clearance was collected from the Covid-19 response team in Cross River State to allow the researchers and their team carryout the study without any interference from the security team. Written consent was attached to the instrument distributed to the participants. Each participant gave their consent to be used for the study. They were first told what the study was for and the anonymity of the information supplied was assured.

**Method of Data Collection and Analysis**

Data collection was for two weeks, with the aid of five research assistant, who were trained on the process of data collection. Data collected from the field was checked to make sure all the questions were attended to the data was then coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics; simple percentages, frequency distribution and graphical illustration and simple lineal regression during the period when the lockdown was eased in cross river state. Out of the 417-instrument distributed, only 393 instruments were returned. Representing 94.2 per cent return rate. this number was used for analysis.

**Findings**

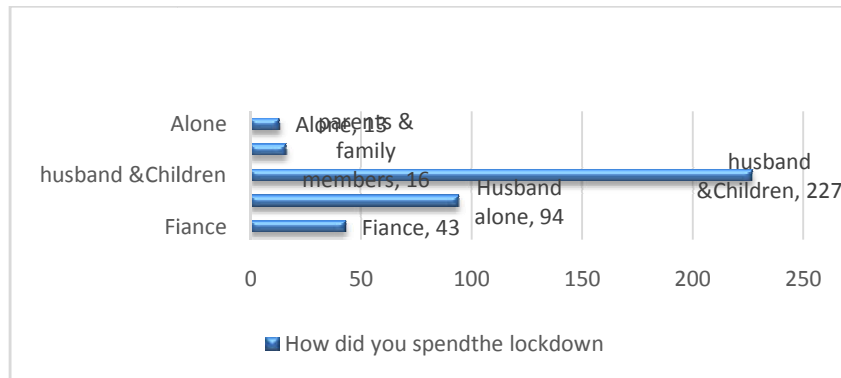
**Presentation of Result**

Questions were develop based on the objective of the study. descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution. Percentages and graphical illustration were used to analyze the data collected from the field before the data was subjected to inferential statistics. Result was presented in Table 1.

**Table 2**  
**Responses on Covid-19, Lockdown and intimate partner Violence**

| S/N | Item                           | Fiancé    | Husband alone | Husband & Children | parents or other family | Alone    |
|-----|--------------------------------|-----------|---------------|--------------------|-------------------------|----------|
| 1   | How did you spend the lockdown | 43 (10.9) | 94 (23.9)     | 227 (57.8)         | 16 (4.1)                | 13 (3.3) |

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

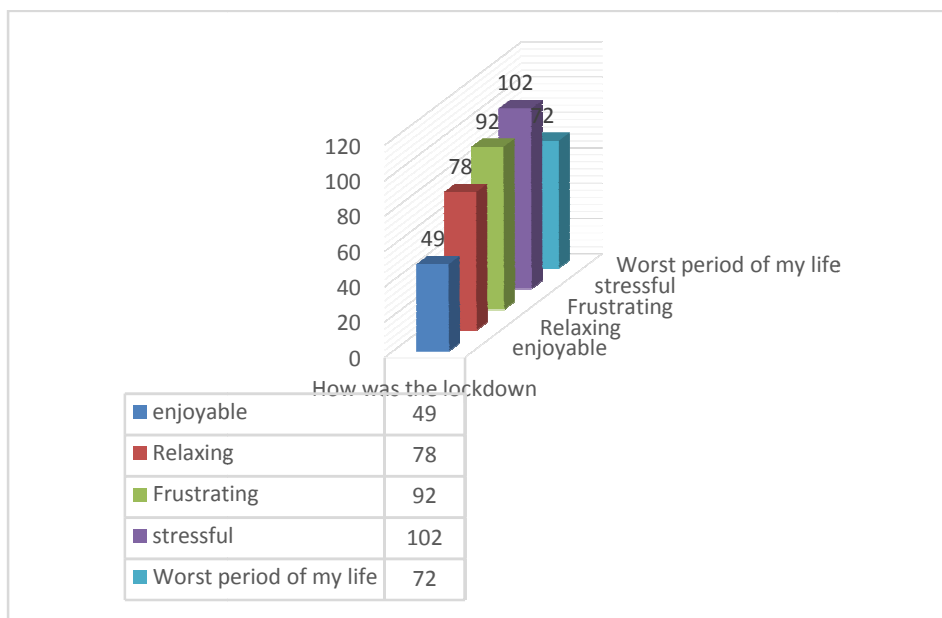


**Fig. 1.**  
**Graphic illustration of Responses on how participants spent the lockdown**  
Source: Fieldwork, 2020

**Table 3**  
**Responses on Covid-19, Lockdown and intimate partner Violence**

| S/N | Item                 | enjoyable | Relaxing  | Frustrating | stressful  | The worst period of my life |
|-----|----------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| 2   | How was the lockdown | 49 (12.5) | 78 (19.8) | 92 (23.4)   | 102 (26.0) | 72(18.3)                    |

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

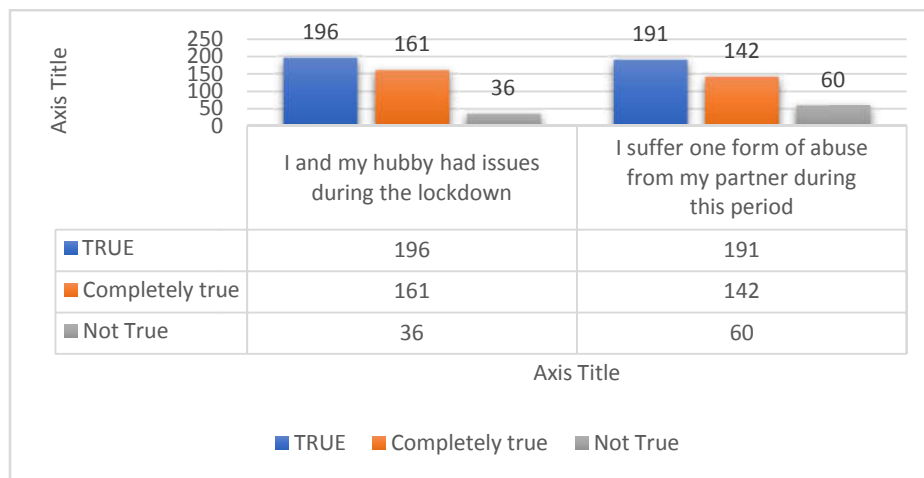


**Fig. 2.**  
**Graphic illustration of Responses on How the lockdown was**  
Source: Fieldwork, 2020

**Table 4**  
**Responses on Covid-19, Lockdown and intimate partner Violence**

| S/N | Item  | True       | Completely true | Not True  |
|-----|---|------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 3   | I and my hubby had issues during the lockdown                 | 196 (49.9) | 161 (41.0)      | 36 (9.1)  |
| 4   | I suffer one form of abuse from my partner during this period | 191 (48.6) | 142 (36.1)      | 60 (15.3) |

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

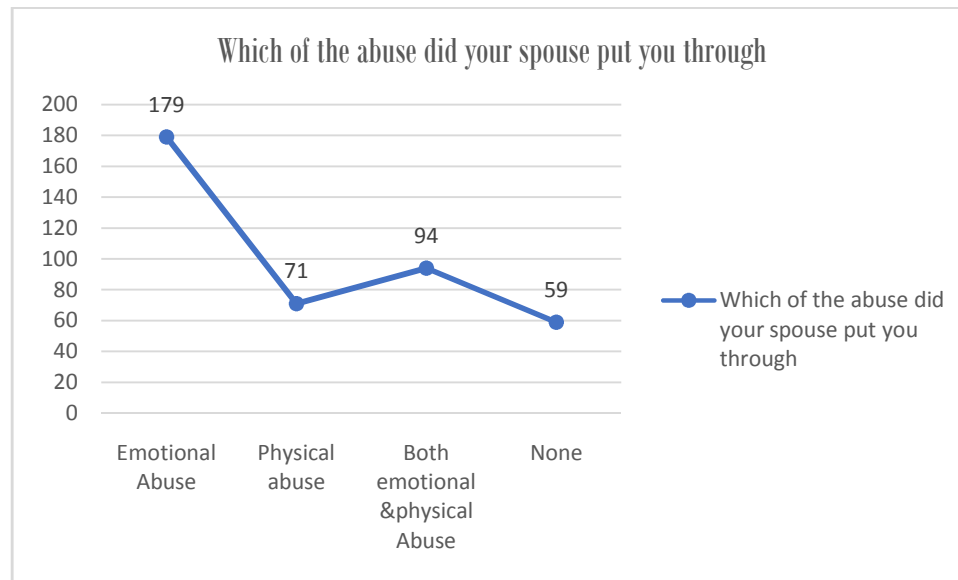


**Fig. 3.**  
**Graphic illustration of Responses on me and my hubby had issues&of abuse from my partner**  
**Source: Fieldwork, 2020**

**Table 5**  
**Responses on Covid-19, Lockdown and intimate partner Violence**

| S/N | Item   | Emotional Abuse | Physical abuse | Both emotional & physical Abuse | None      |
|-----|--|-----------------|----------------|---------------------------------|-----------|
| 5   | Which of the abuse did your spouse put you through | 179 (45.5)      | 71 (18.1)      | 94 (23.9)                       | 59 (15.0) |

**Source: Fieldwork, 2020**



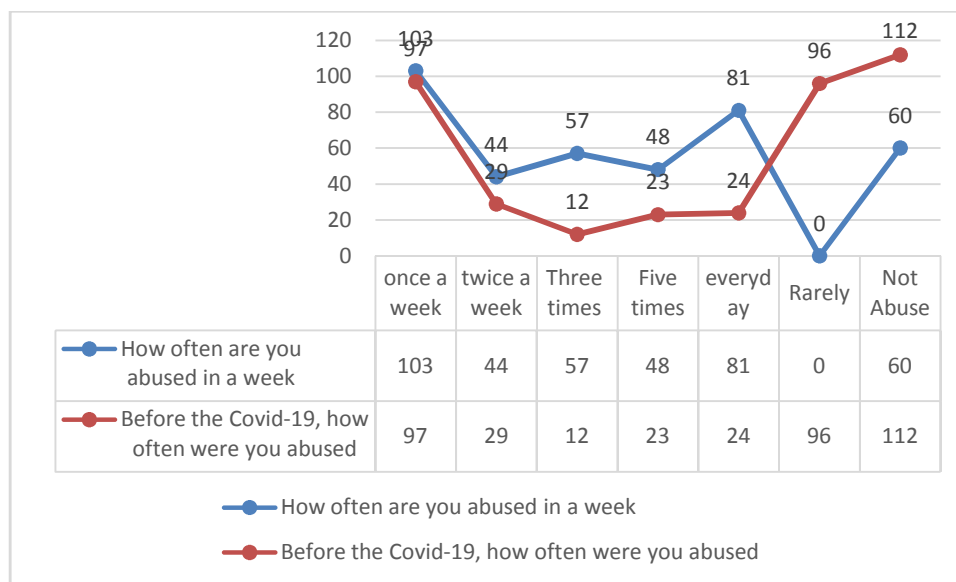
**Fig. 4.**  
**Graphic illustration of Responses on Which of the abuse did your spouse put you through**  
**Source: Fieldwork, 2020**



**Table 6**  
**Responses on Covid-19, Lockdown and intimate partner Violence**

| S/N | Item   | Once a week | Twice a week | Three times | Five times | everyday  | rarely    | Not abused |
|-----|--|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| 6   | How often are you abused in a week             | 103 (26.2)  | 44 (11.2)    | 57 (14.5)   | 48 (12.2)  | 81 (20.6) | 0 (0.0)   | 60 (15.3)  |
| 7   | Before the Covid-19, how often were you abused | 97(24.7)    | 29 (7.7)     | 12 (3.1)    | 23 (5.9)   | 24 (6.1)  | 96 (24.4) | 112 (28.5) |

Source: Fieldwork, 2020



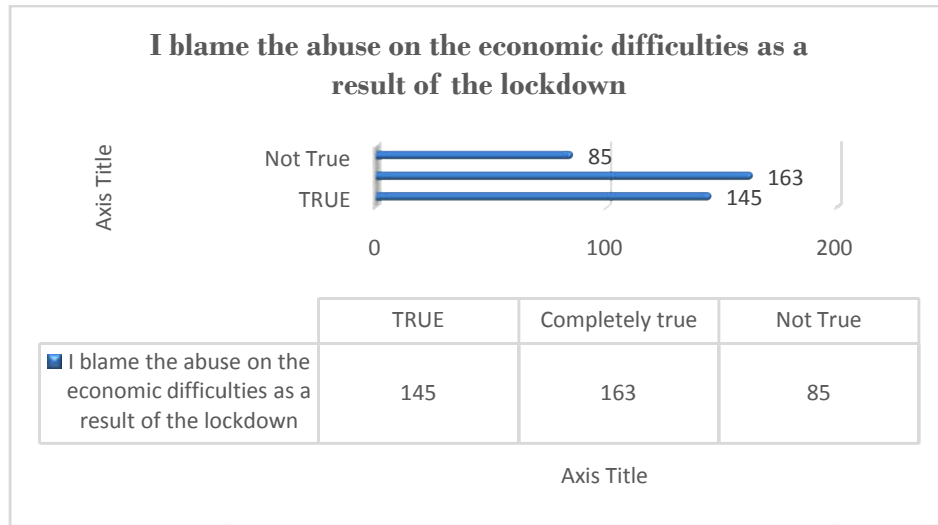
**Fig. 5.**  
**Graphic illustration of Responses on How often are you abused in a week**  
 Source: Fieldwork, 2020

**Table 7**

**Responses on Covid-19, Lockdown and intimate partner Violence**

| S/N | Item   | True       | Completely True | Not true  |
|-----|--|------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 8   | I blame the abuse on the economic difficulties as a result of the lockdown | 145 (36.9) | 163 (41.5)      | 85 (21.6) |

Source: Fieldwork, 2020



**Fig. 6.**

**Graphic illustration of Responses on I blame the abuse on the economic difficulties as a result of the lockdown**

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

Results of the descriptive analysis as presented in table 2 to 7, with graphic illustration in Figure sis as presented in table 2, With graphical illustration in figure 1 to 6 shows participants responses as follows; on how did you spend the lockdown; 43 (10.9%) participants reported with fiancé, 94 (23.9%) participants reported husband alone, 227 (57.8%) participants reported with husband and children, 16 (4.1%) participants reported with parents or other family members and 13 (3.3%) participants reported alone. On How was the lockdown; 49 (12.5%) participants reported enjoyable, 78 (19.8%) participants reported relaxing, 92 (23.4%) participants reported frustrating, 102 (26.0%) participants reported stressful and 72 (18.3%) participants reported worst period of their life. When asked I and my hubby had issues during the lockdown; 196 (49.9%) participants reported true, 161 (41.0%) participants reported completely true, 36 (9.1%) participants reported not true. On I suffer one form of abuse from my partner during this period; 191 (48.6%) participants reported true, 142 (36.1%) participants reported completely true, and 60 (15.3%) participants reported not true. On Which of the abuse did your spouse put you through; 179 (45.5%) participants reported emotional abuse, 71 (18.1%) participants reported physical abuse, 94 (23.9%) participants reported both physical and emotional abuse and 59 (15.0%) participants reported none. On How often are you abused in a week; 103 (26.2%) participants reported once a week, 44 (11.2%) participants reported

twice a week, 57 (14.5%) participants reported three times a week, 48 (12.2%) participants reported five times, 81 (20.6%) participants reported every day and 60 (15.3%) participants reported not abuse. Onbefore the Covid-19, how often were you abused; 97(24.7%)participants reported ones a week, 29 (7.7)participants reported twice a week, 12 (3.1)participants reported three times a week, 23 (5.9)participants reported five times a week, 24 (6.1) participants reported every day, 96 (24.4 that they were rarely abused and finally, 112 (28.5) participants reported that they were never abused, On I blame the abuse on the economic difficulties as a result of the lockdown; 145 (36.9%) answered true, 163 (41.5%) answered completely true and 83 (21.6%) answered not true.

**Correlation Analysis**

A correlation analysis was carried out to check the relationship between Covid-19, lockdown and intimate partner violence using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The independent variable identified in the variables is Covid-19, lockdown, which was measured continuously. The dependent variable identified in the variables is intimate partner violence and this also was measured continuously. The analysis was done as 0.05 confidence level.

**Table 8**  
**Pearson product moment correlation between Covid-19, Lockdown and intimate partner Violence**

| Variable                         | N   | Mean  | SD   | r-value | Sig.  | R <sup>2</sup> |
|----------------------------------|-----|-------|------|---------|-------|----------------|
| <b>Covid-19, Lockdown</b>        | 393 | 12.21 | 2.02 | 0.649   | .000* | 0.42           |
| <b>Intimate partner Violence</b> | 393 | 18.08 | 2.09 |         |       |                |

\*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 391; Critical r-value = 0.098

Source: Field survey, 2020

From the analysis, there was astatistically significant  $r(391) = 0.649$ ;  $p < 0.05$ . This is so because the calculated r-value of 0.649 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.098, at 0.5 alpha ( $\alpha$ ) level of significance. Implying a positive correlation between Covid-19, Lockdown and intimate partner violence. the squared correlation  $(0.649)^2$  which is a measure of effect size indicates the proportion of explained variance on the dependent variable. Therefore, 42.1 per cent of the variance in intimate partner violenceis as a result of Covid-19, Lockdown. The magnitude of the effect is large, this means that Covid-19, Lockdowncorrelates positively with intimate partner violence (this is because of the sign of the r-value). Therefore, the result implies that Covid-19 lockdown has significantly increased the incidence of intimate partner violence.

**Discussion of Findings**

From the result of the data collected from participants and analyzed, it was discovered that most of the participants 264 (67.2%) were married, 119 (30.3%) were in single but in a serious relationship and 10 (2.5%) were divorced or separated. Result also showed that most of the respondents 205 (52.2%) were aged 30-39, the was followed by 79 (20.1%) respondents who were aged 20 – 29. Then followed by 40 (10.2%) who were aged 40 and above. Data analyzed also revealed in terms of educational qualification that most of the respondents 171 (43.5%) had a first degree. 124 (31.6%) respondents finished secondary school or college, 37 (9.4%) respondents had post-graduate degrees and finally, 63 (16.0%) participants had little or no formal education.

The result from the descriptive analysis revealed that most of the respondents 321 representing 81.7 per cent spend the lockdown with their immediate family (husband or husband and children). The result from the analysis also revealed that during the lockdown spent with their spouse, most respondents 357 representing 90.9 per cent and their husbands had problems issue. This is because the Coronavirus pandemic and the socioeconomic shock that accompanied it made the institution of marriage and family life very vulnerable creating tension and anxiety in relationship. Lehmilller, Garcia, Gesselman, and Mark (2020) in a study found that both sexual relation and family life is affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Findings also revealed that 334 respondents representing 85.0 per cent suffered from one form of abuse of the other. The most common form of abuse suffered by the participants is emotional abuse (45.5%), followed by physical abuse (23.9%) and only 15 per cent suffered both emotional abuse and physical abuse. Most respondent, 26.2 per cent reported been abused at least ones a week., 21.4 per cent, participants reported that they were abused at least twice a week. 14.5 per cent at least three times a week, while 10.4 per cent reported that they were abuse every day. On the rate of abuse before the pandemic; most of the participants, 28.5 per cent were never abused, 24.4 per cent, participants reported rarely been abused, 24.7 per cent of the participants were abused at least ones a week.Only 6.1 per cent -reported that they were abused every day

The result of the correlation analysis revealed that there was a statistically significant  $r(391) = 0.649$  at 0.05 level of significance. This is because the calculated  $r$ -value of 0.649 is greater than the critical  $r$ -value of 0.098. the result implies that Covid-19, Lockdown significantly correlates with intimate partner violence. Also, 42.1 per cent of the variance in intimate partner violence is as a result of Covid-19, Lockdown. The magnitude of the effect is large, this means that Covid-19, Lockdown significantly increase the incidence of intimate partner violence. the findingsare supported by the various reports and finding such as Allen -Ebrahimiam (2020), digital (2020), United Nation (2020b) and The Lagos State Domestic and Social Respond Team (2020). The study and reports all reported a sharp increase in intimate partner violence in Calabar and these are attributed to the Covid-19 lockdown.

### **Conclusion and Policy Implication**

With the quarantine and other measures put in place to curb the spread of Covid-19 and the continuous closure businesses and organisations likely to continue into the unforeseen future. Family strain, unemployment, reduced income and stress will continue to be an outcome of these measures, resulting in strain in couple relationships. This will as the findings of this study has shown continue to result in an increase in intimate partner and other domestic violence. Hence, there is need for the government to include Covid-19 essential services that will focus on intimate partner and other domestic violence response, provide the necessary resource that will make them function properly and identify ways to make them assessable. the government need to address those barriers impeding access to service including healthcare by sufferers, survivors of intimate partner violence by considering and removing those constraints hindering women from seeking help.

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