Introduction: Violence, though the form and type vary from place to place is rampant in Ethiopia. Domestic violence related studies are few in rural areas where it is perceived as an accepted practice due to various reasons. Women who experience violence have no chance to ask for legal support, which may allow the perpetuators to continue beating and harming them. The aim of this study was to identify type, perpetrator and reasons of domestic violence against women in the study site and give the information to the concerned bodies working for the betterment of women’s life.

Method: A community based cross-sectional interview-based survey was conducted in Kersa demographic Surveillance and Health Research Center field site on females of reproductive age (15-49). The women were selected from 12 kebeles/local districts/ and proportional sample size of the existing householders in each kebele has been allocated to select the study subjects. A structured, pre-tested questionnaire was administered by trained data collectors to assess the knowledge and prevalence of domestic violence in Kersa district, East Hararge, Oromia region Ethiopia.

Result: Among women interviewed concerning violence, 337 (39.7%) reported to know what violence against women means. Majority, 186 (55.2%) reported that physical harm was the most common form of violence practiced in the community followed by verbal insult 104 (30.9.6%). Ever experience of violence by intimate partner was reported by 166 (19.5%) women; and (70.3 %) of the perpetrators were husbands. Ever experience of domestic violence among women was statistically significantly related with Amhara ethnicity (p=0.031), Christian religion, (p=0.019) and age group 40-49 (p=0.05). Only 33 (19.9 %) women who ever had the experience of violence had reported it to the legal bodies. Women failed to report to the legal system for two reasons: they did not want to expose the issue and they did not know where to go for the problem.

Conclusion: Twenty percent of women of reproductive age in the rural area of Kersa reported experience of domestic violence. Majority of the perpetrators are intimate partners/husbands. The legal system and women’s awareness of it as well as reporting violence are not well developed. Failure to report to the legal system is associated with socio-demographic and cultural factors that hinder women not to disclose the case. Therefore all the concerned bodies should act to work together with the local and regional females’ affairs offices in Ethiopia.