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One in Three U.S. Youths Report Being Victims of Dating Violence

Nearly one in three say they have been violent toward a date, new research says

HONOLULU — About one in three American youths age 14-20 say they've been victims of dating violence and almost one in three acknowledge they've committed violence toward a date, according to new research presented at the American Psychological Association's 121st Annual Convention.

"Adolescent dating violence is common among young people. It also overlaps between victimization and perpetration and across different forms of dating abuse," according to Michele Ybarra, MPH, PhD. She is with the Center for Innovative Public Health Research, based in San Clemente, Calif.

Researchers analyzed information collected in 2011 and 2012 from 1,058 youths in the Growing Up with Media study, a national online survey funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The study defines teen dating violence as physical, sexual or psychological/emotional violence within a dating relationship.

Girls were almost equally likely to be a perpetrator as a victim of violence: 41 percent reported victimization and 35 percent reported perpetration at some point in their lives. Among boys, 37 percent said they had been on the receiving end, while 29 percent reported being the perpetrator, Ybarra said. Twenty-nine percent of the girls and 24 percent of the boys reported being both a victim and perpetrator in either the same or in different relationships.

Girls were significantly more likely than boys to say they had been victims of sexual dating violence and that they had committed physical dating violence. Boys were much more likely than girls to report that they had been sexually violent toward a date. Experiencing psychological dating violence was about equal for boys and girls. Rates generally increased with age but were consistent across race, ethnicity and income levels, according to Ybarra.

The relationship between bullying and teen dating violence was the focus of a separate presentation by Sabina Low, PhD, of Arizona State University, and Dorothy L. Espelage, of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Low and Espelage detailed findings from a five-year study funded by the CDC and National Institute of Justice involving 625 American youths who completed surveys six times from middle school through high school.

"Both boys and girls who engaged in high rates of bullying toward other students at the start of the study were seven times more likely to report being physically violent in dating relationships four years later," said Espelage, principal investigator on the project. "These findings indicate that bully prevention needs to start early in order to prevent the transmission of violence in dating relationships."

Additional presenters Carlos A. Cuevas, PhD, of Northeastern University, and Chiara Sabina, PhD, of Penn State Harrisburg described how culture relates to teen dating violence and delinquency among Latino youths. Cultural factors, particularly family support, apparently decreases the odds of Latino youths being involved in delinquency, physical assaults, property damage and substance use, according to Cuevas. Their study also funded by the National Institute of Justice, analyzed data from a national sample of 1,525 Latinos age 12-18.

Latino boys with family support were less likely to be psychologically violent toward dates, while those who were deemed to have adopted more of the Anglo culture were less likely to be sexually violent to dates, according to the findings.

Session: "Teen Dating Violence — Rates, Comorbid Delinquency and Culture"

Symposium session 1012, Wednesday, July 31, 8:00 a.m. - 8:50 a.m. HST, Hawai'i Convention Center, room 301A

Presentations:

“National Rates of Adolescent Physical, Psychological, and Sexual Teen-Dating Violence,” ([/news/press/releases/2013/08/sexual-teen.pdf](#)) (PDF, 59KB) Michele Ybarra PhD, MPH, Dorothy L. Espelage, PhD Jennifer Langhinrichsen-Rohling, PhD, Josephine D. Korchmaros, PhD, and Danah Boyd, PhD

“Relation Between Bully Perpetration and Teen-Dating Violence Perpetration Across Adolescence,” ([/news/press/releases/2013/08/bully-dating.pdf](#)) (PDF, 438KB) Sabina Low PhD, Dorothy L. Espelage, PhD, and Carolyn Anderson, PhD

“Role of Cultural Factors on Dating-Violence Perpetration and Delinquency Among Latino Youth,” ([/news/press/releases/2013/08/dating-violence.pdf](#)) (PDF, 46KB) Carlos A. Cuevas, PhD, Chiara Sabina, PhD

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