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12/14/15
I Would Like to Start by Thanking my Co-Authors

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Teen Dating Violence

- Although there has been research on teen dating violence (TDV) for several decades, the subject has only received attention as a public health concern in recent years.
Brief Background on TDV Research

- CDC’s definition includes several forms of violence
  - Physical
  - Sexual
  - Psychological
  - Stalking

- Researchers rarely measure multiple types in the same study

- Associations exist between various forms of TDV victimization and a range of short- and long-term negative health outcomes
  - Depression
  - Substance use
  - Suicidality
  - Risky sexual behavior
Teen Dating Violence

Cross-sectional research indicates that TDV victimization is associated with:

- Increased alcohol and tobacco use
- Depressive symptoms
- Suicidality
- Internalizing behaviors
- Eating disorders
- Risky sexual behaviors
  - e.g., not using condoms and multiple sex partners
Longitudinal studies have demonstrated that TDV victimization has lasting effects because those persons entering adulthood with a history of TDV victimization report negative consequences such as:

- Depression
- Substance use
- Suicidality
- Future intimate partner violence victimization
Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

Methods

- The YRBS was developed by the CDC to monitor priority health-risk behaviors among youth
- School-based, cross-sectional survey that has been conducted biennially since 1991
- Independent 3-stage cluster-sample design
- Nationally-representative sample of public and private school students in grades 9 through 12
- All 50 states and the District of Colombia
- Student participation is anonymous and voluntary
- Weighting factor is used to adjust for nonresponse and the oversampling of black and Hispanic students
- Institutional review board (IRB) at CDC approved the national YRBS
A single question on Physical TDV was asked from 1999 to 2011.

Rates for this question remained around 9% across years with similar rates among female and male students.

Nationally, the 2009 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) found that 9.9% of girls reported having been “Hit, Slapped, Or Physically Hurt On Purpose By Their Boyfriend Or Girlfriend” (physical violence) in the year prior to the YRBS.

Approximately 9% of high school students report being hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the 12 months before surveyed.

Teenage dating violence (TDV) is a significant public health problem. The 2011 Youth Risk Behavior survey found that 9.4% of students in the United States reported that they had been hit, slapped, or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend. The purpose of this study was...
Ongoing National Studies of Sexual TDV

- Until recently, there have been no ongoing national studies of sexual TDV to our knowledge, but one study from the 2005 National Survey of Adolescents found higher lifetime prevalence rates of sexual TDV for girls than for boys.

- In addition, results from studies that used convenience samples found rates of sexual TDV varying from 8% to 25% for females and from 5% to 11% for males, depending on the questions used and populations assessed.
Issues with the Previous YRBS Physical TDV Question

“During the past 12 months, did your boyfriend or girlfriend ever hit, slap, or physically hurt you on purpose?”

- Combines less serious acts (e.g., slapped) with more serious acts (e.g., hurt you on purpose)

- Location of “on purpose” made it unclear if it was referring to “physically hurt” or all types of aggression listed
  - Responses from previous years could have captured “horseplay” or play fighting that has been shown to be common in teen dating relationships

- “Boyfriend/Girlfriend” – may have inadvertently included more serious relationships and excluded more casual dating relationships
Previous YRBS Physical TDV Question Response Options

- A yes or no response option was used
  - There was no way to know how many times this occurred in the past 12 months

- Does not differentiate between those who reported dating and those who did not
  - This made it impossible to determine whether someone had never dated or had dated but had not experienced physical TDV
Revisions to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) - 2013

- **Revisions to the Physical TDV question**
  - Stating “physically hurt you on purpose” prior to listing types of violence
  - Including only more serious forms of violence
  - Rewording “boyfriend or girlfriend” to more inclusive language – “dating or going out with”

- **Added an item on Sexual TDV**

- **Altered the response options**
  - Having students identify whether they dated in the past 12 months
  - Asking about the frequency of violence
2013 YRBS Physical and Sexual TDV Questions

- **Physical TDV**
  - “During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with physically hurt you on purpose? (Count such things as being hit, slammed into something, or injured with an object or weapon).”

- **Sexual TDV**
  - “During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with force you to do sexual things that you did not want to do? (Count such things as kissing, touching, or being physically forced to have sexual intercourse).”
By including questions on both Physical and Sexual TDV, we were able to look at those youth who experienced:
- Physical TDV only
- Sexual TDV only
- Both Physical and Sexual TDV
- Any TDV (physical only, sexual only, or both physical and sexual)
- None

These distinctions may be important because some health-risk behaviors have been shown to be associated with certain types of TDV but not others.

By measuring these two types of TDV, we can determine whether there is variation with health-risk behaviors by type of TDV.
Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

- **Measures**
  - Physical and Sexual TDV questions
  - Health-risk behaviors selected because of their longitudinal association with TDV
    - Suicide ideation and attempts
    - Alcohol and other drug use
    - Physical fighting
    - Cyber-bullying
    - Sexual risk behaviors
      - Multiple sex partners
      - Currently sexually active
2013 YRBS Physical and Sexual TDV Questions

- **Purpose of the study:**
  - Describe the content of the new 2013 physical and sexual TDV questions
  - Present the updated prevalence estimates for TDV
    - Including the first ever published “both” and “any” national estimates and the frequency of any TDV among both male and female students
    - Examine differences in health-risk behaviors by type of TDV victimization

- **We hypothesized that the 2013 physical and sexual TDV questions would have strong and distinct associations with selected health-risk behaviors**
  - e.g., suicide ideation and attempts, violence and bullying, alcohol and other drug use, and sexual risk behaviors
Prevalence of Physical and Sexual TDV among Students who Dated within Past 12 Months

- Among the 75% of female students who dated
  - 6.6% physical TDV only
  - 8.0% sexual TDV only
  - 6.4% both physical and sexual TDV
  - 20.9% any TDV

- Among the 72.8% of male students who dated
  - 4.1% physical TDV only
  - 2.9% sexual TDV only
  - 3.3% both physical and sexual TDV
  - 10.4% any TDV

- The distribution of TDV differed by sex (p<0.0001)
- The prevalence of TDV also varied by race/ethnicity, but not by grade
Prevalence of TDV among Students who Dated within Past 12 Months by Frequency of Victimization

- Among all subgroups, the vast majority of students did not report experiencing TDV
  - But most students who experienced TDV experienced more than one incident

- **Physical TDV**
  - Females – 4.8% reported one incident
  - Females – 8.2% reported two incidents or more
  - Males – 2.3% reported one incident
  - Males – 5.1% reported two incidents or more

- **Sexual TDV**
  - Females – 5.7% reported one incident
  - Females – 8.6% reported two incidents or more
  - Males – 2.0% reported one incident
  - Males – 4.1% reported two incidents or more
Associations between TDV and Selected Health-Risk Behaviors

- **For both male and female students**
  - Every risk behavior was most prevalent among students who had experienced both physical and sexual TDV and least among students who experienced no TDV (all p<0.001)
  - The adjusted rates were higher for every risk behavior among students experiencing
    - Physical TDV only compared to students experiencing none
    - Both physical and sexual TDV compared to students experiencing none

- **The associations were not consistent among students who experienced sexual TDV only**
Associations between TDV and Selected Health-Risk Behaviors

- Female students who experienced sexual TDV only were more likely than those who experienced none to
  - Seriously consider attempting suicide
  - Make a suicide plan
  - Attempt suicide
  - Get in a physical fight
  - Carry a weapon
  - Be electronically bullied
  - Report current alcohol use and binge drinking

- Male students who experienced sexual TDV only were more likely than those who experienced no TDV to experience these behaviors, as well as having sex with four or more people and be currently sexually active
Why Did the Prevalence Rates Change so Drastically During the 2013 Administration?

- **The data cannot answer this question directly**
  - May be due, in part, to the fact that the new question clarifies the intent to physically harm and eliminates confusion around whether or not to include play-fighting
    - Teens often use physical contact as a form of flirting
  - Including only those who dated in the denominator is also an important clarification
  - Enabling students to indicate that they have not dated during the time period of interest helps exclude acts that may have been perpetrated outside a dating relationship

- **Sexual violence is often a component of the TDV victimization experience**
  - The new TDV items represent an expansion and fine-tuning of the TDV measurement
Implications for TDV Prevention Efforts

- Female students may have a higher prevalence rate of TDV than male students, both male and female students are impacted by TDV
  - Prevention efforts may be more effective if they include content for both sexes

- TDV victimization was associated with a constellation of health-risk behaviors
  - It may be possible that implementing TDV prevention programming may also affect the rates of these behaviors
Limitations

- Because of limited space, we were unable to assess all aspects of TDV (e.g., psychological aggression and stalking)
  - Also not able to include behaviorally specific items for each type of violence
- Could not measure fear or injury associated with TDV
- YRBS data are cross-sectional
  - Can only provide an indication of associations between TDV and health-risk behaviors
- Data are only generalizable to adolescents who attend school
- Data are self-reported
Conclusions

- Both physical and sexual TDV are prevalent among high school students and sex differences exist in both outcomes.
- Approximately one in five female students and one in ten male students have been victims of physical and/or sexual TDV during the past 12 months.
- Female students had double the prevalence of any form of TDV than male students.
- Most victims of physical or sexual TDV reported more than one incident.
- Physical and sexual TDV victimization was associated with several health-risk behaviors.
Conclusions

- These findings suggest that there may be different health risks related to the type of TDV experienced, and that there may be a cumulative negative effect for victims experiencing both TDV types.

- Although our estimates of TDV do not include other forms of TDV (e.g., psychological, stalking), they still represent a vast improvement and allows for more accurate rates than the previous YRBS TDV question.
Conclusions

- We believe that we now have a more relevant and robust estimate of TDV
  - Focusing the physical TDV item on more serious aggression
  - Adding sexual TDV
    - The first nationally-representative rate of sexual TDV from an ongoing survey

- The field now has new prevalence estimates of TDV

- Further demonstrated that those who experience different forms of TDV are at risk for multiple other health-risk behaviors
Thank You!

Author note: The findings and conclusions in this presentation are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

For more information please contact Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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