



HEALTH

- THE ARTS
- CHILD POLICY
- CIVIL JUSTICE
- EDUCATION
- ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT
- HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE
- INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
- NATIONAL SECURITY
- POPULATION AND AGING
- PUBLIC SAFETY
- SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
- SUBSTANCE ABUSE
- TERRORISM AND HOMELAND SECURITY
- TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE
- WORKFORCE AND WORKPLACE

This PDF document was made available from www.rand.org as a public service of the RAND Corporation.

[Jump down to document](#) ▼

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit research organization providing objective analysis and effective solutions that address the challenges facing the public and private sectors around the world.

Support RAND

[Browse Books & Publications](#)

[Make a charitable contribution](#)

For More Information

Visit RAND at www.rand.org

Explore [RAND Health](#)

View [document details](#)

This product is part of the RAND Corporation reprint series. RAND reprints reproduce previously published journal articles and book chapters with the permission of the publisher. RAND reprints have been formally reviewed in accordance with the publisher's editorial policy.

DATING VIOLENCE AMONG ADOLESCENTS

Prevalence, Gender Distribution, and Prevention Program Effectiveness

LAURA J. HICKMAN
LISA H. JAYCOX
RAND Corporation

JESSICA ARONOFF
Break the Cycle

Relative to violence among adult intimate partners, violence among adolescent dating partners remains an understudied phenomenon. In this review, we assess the state of the research literature on teen dating violence. Our review reveals that the broad range of estimates produced by major national data sources and single studies make conclusions about the prevalence of teen dating violence premature. Similarly, our review of what is known about risk factors reveals inconsistency among studies. We assess published evaluations of adolescent dating violence prevention programs and discuss their findings and limitations. Finally, we discuss challenges to researchers in this area and suggest that additional investment in high-quality basic research is needed to inform the development of sound theory and effective prevention and intervention programs.

Key words: *dating violence, aggression, gender, adolescents, prevention, prevalence*

OVER THE PAST THIRTY YEARS, there has been an increasing understanding of the complexity, severity, and widespread nature of violence between present and former intimate partners (Pleck, 1987). Accompanying this awareness has been a growing emphasis on developing and enhancing methods of preventing and reducing this social problem. As pointed out by Roberts (1996), partner violence was for-

merly conceptualized as consisting of a relatively narrow range of acts, predominantly the use of minor physical force. It is now more generally recognized as a continuum of abuse, including homicide, minor and severe physical assault, sexual assault, threats and harassment, robbery, property damage, kidnapping, stalking, economic deprivation, animal abuse, and psychological coercion and intimidation

AUTHORS' NOTE: Correspondence may be addressed to Lisa Jaycox, Ph.D., RAND Corporation, 1200 South Hayes Street, Arlington, VA 22202; e-mail: jaycox@rand.org.

TRAUMA, VIOLENCE, & ABUSE, Vol. 5, No. 2, April 2004 123-142
DOI: 10.1177/1524838003262332
© 2004 Sage Publications

(Campbell, 1992; Halsted, 1992; Reiss & Roth, 1993; U.S. Attorney's General Task Force on Family Violence, 1984).

Intimate relationships have also been redefined. Initially, women married to and living with violent husbands drew the bulk of attention (Gordon, 1988; Pleck, 1987). Other categories of partner violence victims have been recognized, including separated and divorced spouses, present and former unmarried cohabitants, and dating and same-sex partners.

Despite the broadened perspective of intimate partner violence, violence perpetrated by and against adolescents in dating relationships has yet to emerge as a major focus of attention among reformers or researchers.

developmental period when courtship behavior is first initiated and when the risk of abuse by or against a dating partner first emerges. Given the crucial nature of this period, it is surprising that so little is known about the size and distribution of the problem of dating violence during adolescence and the effectiveness of programs designed to address it.

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (1993-1999) *Supplementary Homicide Reports*, about 10% of all 12- to-15-year-old girls, and 22% of all 16- to-19-year old girls, murdered between 1993 and 1999 were killed by an intimate partner.

relationships. We then review results of dating violence prevention program evaluations. We

discuss limitations of the existing studies, areas where more research is needed, and highlight potential explanations for the lack of researcher investment in this topic area. Finally, we suggest that additional investment in high-quality basic research is needed to inform the development of sound theory and effective programs to prevent and intervene in dating violence between adolescent partners.

MEASURING THE SIZE OF THE PROBLEM

Far more is known about the problem of partner violence in terms of prevalence, gender distribution, context, and consequences among college students and adults than among adolescents. Very few studies have focused specifically on teens, leaving many questions unanswered and need for further investigation. However, homicide data, data from two ongoing national surveys, (and several cross-sectional studies of specific populations) do provide some findings about prevalence of dating violence, and how it varies by sex and context.

National Victimization Prevalence Estimates

Homicide data and self-report survey data are among the few national data sources on dating violence among adolescents. Homicide data show girls to be at much higher risk than boys for the most extreme form of partner violence. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (1993-1999) *Supplementary Homicide Reports*, about 10% of all 12- to-15-year-old girls, and 22% of all 16- to-19-year old girls, murdered between 1993 and 1999 were killed by an intimate partner. By contrast, intimate partners were the perpetrators of only about 1% of homicides among boys in these age groups.

The National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) is designed to measure criminal victimization among all U.S. households and is conducted by the Census Bureau for the Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Conducted since 1973, the NCVS is a nationally representative household survey, conducted every 6 months with approximately 100,000 individuals at least 12 years of age in about 50,000

households. It contains questions on violent and property criminal victimization, including specific questions about violence perpetrated by boyfriends, girlfriends, and present and former spouses (Kindermann, Lynch, & Cantor, 1997). It is perhaps the most widely cited source of national estimates for partner violence among adults.

Recent published summary reports of NCVS data do not provide overall prevalence estimates for boys and girls combined or estimates only for those age 12 to 18 years; 19-year-old youths are also included. The published reports do show physical and sexual victimization by intimate partners to be relatively low for boys and girls 12 to 15 years of age but higher for those 16 to 19 years of age (Rennison & Welchans, 2000). Between 1993 and 1998, the average annual percentage of girls aged 12 to 15 years who suffered victimization was 0.3% and 0.1% of boys of the same age. Among those aged 16 to 19 years, 1.7% of girls but only 0.2% of boys reported violent physical or sexual victimization by an intimate partner.

Another source of national data is the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) survey, sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and designed to measure health risk behaviors among U.S. high school students. Conducted annually, it is designed to assess a range of health-risk behaviors in a representative sample of American students grades 9 through 11. Prevalence estimates produced by the YRBSS are several times that reported by the NCVS, with less disparity by sex. In 2001, 9.8% of girls and 9.1% of boys reported experiencing physical violence over the previous 12 months at the hands of a dating partner (Grunbaum et al., 2002).

Clearly, the victimization estimates of the NCVS and YRBSS differ, and this may be because of the nature of the two data sources. Some obvious differences are that NCVS includes a broader age range than the YRBSS and includes sexual violence, whereas the YRBSS taps only physical violence. These differences are not likely to be solely responsible for producing the disparate estimates. Another possible explanation may be other differences between the two samples and the manner in

KEY POINTS OF THE RESEARCH REVIEW

- Although research on intimate partner violence among adults has dramatically expanded over the past 30 years, comparatively little is understood about partner violence among adolescents.
- Although dating violence is clearly an important problem for teens, no consensus has emerged about the prevalence and gender distribution of violence between adolescent dating partners, and two major sources of national data produce widely divergent estimates.
- Few studies have evaluated programs for adolescents designed to prevent dating violence, and the results of the existing studies do not present conclusive evidence about the efficacy of these programs.
- There are a number of challenges that face researchers interested in investigating adolescent dating violence and this may explain the dearth of research in this area.
- Despite these challenges, greater attention on conducting methodologically rigorous descriptive studies of the phenomenon and high quality evaluations of programs designed to prevent dating violence among adolescents are greatly needed.

which the surveys are conducted. The NCVS is designed to survey a nationally representative sample of American households, while the YRBSS represents American high school students. NCVS respondents are interviewed in the presence of other household members, whereas YRBSS respondents complete an anonymous paper-and-pencil instrument in relative privacy within a classroom environment. The lack of privacy during the NCVS interviews has been criticized for its potential to suppress adolescent's reporting, who may be reluctant to reveal victimization in front of parents (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 1999). Similar differences between classroom-administered surveys and household surveys have been noted in relation to teen reports about substance abuse (e.g., Gfroerer, Wright, & Kopstein, 1997), supporting the notion that there is potential underreporting of sensitive, personal information among teens participating in household surveys.

Finally, the NCVS presents questions within a criminal victimization context. Adolescents in

the NCVS may underreport criminal victimization of all sorts because violence by peers may not be viewed as a legitimate crime (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 1999). By contrast, the YRBSS asks students about dating violence in the context of other health risk behaviors, including smoking, sexual behavior, dietary habits, alcohol and drug use, accidental injuries, and physical fights with peers.

Single Study Prevalence Estimates

Estimates from published single studies of dating violence victimization among adolescents are more consistent with those of the YRBSS than NCVS, however many single-study estimates of physical victimization are higher than those produced by the YRBSS. These studies generally employ a format similar to the YRBSS, that is pencil-and-paper questionnaires completed within a classroom environment. Many use the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) (Straus, 1979), modified for use in a classroom with adolescents. Studies examining overall prevalence of dating violence among adolescents often share similarities in their samples but have produced quite disparate estimates. In

Although not assessed by Roscoe and Callahan, Molidor and colleagues did find a considerable gender difference in sexual violence. Of girls, 18% had suffered sexual violence compared to 0.3% of boys.

the single studies, perpetration estimates range from 26% to 46% for physical violence and 3% to 12% for sexual violence. For victimization, estimates range from a low of 9% to a high of 23% for physical perpetration and victimization, further limiting the ability to draw

conclusions. Table 1 provides a summary of these studies, their samples, and prevalence estimates.

Patterns of Adolescent Dating Violence

In addition to examining the overall prevalence of adolescent dating violence, understanding how dating violence is distributed is important for the development of theory and

promising programming. Unfortunately, studies share few common descriptive variables seeking to capture risk and protective factors. Of the published studies displayed in Table 1, the only variable assessed across all studies was gender. Two studies examined geographic distribution of victimization. Another two studies focusing on perpetration examined justification of the use of violence and observation of violence between parents. Because other variables were examined only in a single study, we cannot assess how findings may compare across studies.

We first discuss gender. For studies using separate measures of physical and sexual victimization, estimates of physical victimization among girls range from 8% to 57% and 6% to 38% among boys. For sexual victimization, estimates fall between 14% to 43% for girls and 0.3% and 36% for boys. Physical violence perpetration estimates for girls range from 28% to 33% and from 11% to 20% for boys. Estimates of sexual violence perpetration among girls range from 2% and 24% and 3% and 37% for boys. See Table 2 for a summary of these studies.

Roscoe and Callahan (1985) found that 10% of girls and 6% of boys in their midwestern high school sample experienced physical dating violence. In addition, in a midwest high school sample and using a modified CTS instrument, Molidor and colleagues found a much larger percentage of girls and boys reporting ever experiencing physical dating violence (36% and 37%, respectively) but less gender disparity in such victimization (Molidor, Tolman, & Kober, 2000).¹ Although not assessed by Roscoe and Callahan, Molidor and colleagues did find a considerable gender difference in sexual violence. Of girls, 18% had suffered sexual violence compared to 0.3% of boys.

Examining only perpetration, Schwartz and colleagues (Schwartz, O'Leary, & Kendziora, 1997) found a great deal of difference in dating violence in their suburban adolescent sample. On a combined measure of sexual and physical violence, 44% of girls reported perpetrating at least one such act compared to only 16% of boys. Boys were more likely to report committing serious acts of violence, such as threats with a gun or knife, beating up a partner whereas girls

TABLE 1: Summary of Overall Dating Violence Prevalence Studies

Source ^a	Sample	Instrument	Victimization (%)		Perpetration (%)	
			Physical	Sexual	Physical	Sexual
Grunbaum et al. (2002)	Nationally representative sample of American high school students. N = 13,601	YRBSS	10 ^b 9 to 10	NR	NR	NR
Roscoe and Callahan (1985)	White 11th- and 12th-grade Midwestern students N = 204	Modified CTS	9 5 to 13 ^c	5 2 to 8	NR	NR
O'Keefe (1997)	Los Angeles high school students: 53% Latino, 20% White; 51% low SES, 30% middle SES N = 939	Modified CTS	NR	NR	42+ 39	to 45
Schwartz, O'Leary, and Kendziora (1997)	Mostly White (90%) high school students in two suburban school districts N = 228	Modified CTS	NR	NR	26 20 to 32	3 1 to 5
Watson, Cascardi, Avery-Leaf, and O'Leary (2001)	New York City high school students from a largely low SES community: 32% White, 43% Hispanic, 16% Black N = 401	Modified CTS	NR	NR	46 41 to 51	NR
Jaycox et al. (2004)	Mostly Latino (92%) Los Angeles 9th graders N = 318	Modified CTS	23 18 to 28	15 11 to 19	27 22 to 32	12 8 to 16
Spencer and Bryant (2000)	Mostly White urban, suburban, and rural New York state high school students N = 1,993	Teen assessment project items	10 9 to 11	NR	NR	NR
Bergman (1992)	Mostly White ^e urban, suburban, and rural Midwest high school students N = 631	One-page survey	12 9 to 15	10 8 to 12	NR	NR
			18 15 to 21 ^d			

NOTE: NR = not reported; SES = socioeconomic status; YRBSS = Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System; CTS = Conflict Tactics Scale.

a. National Crime Victimization Survey results not included because they are not reported as overall prevalence.

b. Rounded point estimate.

c. 95% rounded confidence interval.

d. = Combined category of physical and sexual violence.

e. = Percentage of racial groups not reported.

more often reported pushing and shoving; slapping, kicking, and biting; and hitting with fists or an object. On a single item about sexual violence, boys and girls were similar in their perpetration reports, 3% and 2% respectively.

The findings from the two studies employing a modified CTS with diverse, lower socioeconomic status (SES), urban samples cannot be directly compared because one assesses victimization whereas the other assesses perpetration. The New York City sample examined by Watson and colleagues (Watson, Cascardi, Avery-Leaf, & O'Leary, 2001) reveals considerable gender disparity in prevalence of physical victimization; 57% of girls reported experiencing physical violence compared to 38% of boys. O'Keefe's (1997) analysis of violence perpetration in a Los Angeles sample found much less

gender disparity in general, with 44% of girls and 39% of boys reporting committing some act of physical or sexual violence against a dating partner. O'Keefe also found, however, a large difference in reported acts of sexual violence against a dating partner, with 13% of boys but only 3% of girls perpetrating such acts.

O'Keefe also examined the context of the violence and found a gender difference in commission of dating violence. Boys and girls reported anger as their primary reason for violence, however girls were more likely to re-

Boys and girls reported anger as their primary reason for violence, however girls were more likely to report using violence as self-defense, whereas boys reported using violence to exert control over their dating partner.

TABLE 2: Summary of Gender Distribution in Dating Violence Studies

Source	Female				Male			
	Victimization (%)		Perpetration (%)		Victimization (%)		Perpetration (%)	
	Physical	Sexual	Physical	Sexual	Physical	Sexual	Physical	Sexual
NCVS (1993-1998) 12 to 15 years	0.3+				0.1+			
16 to 19 years	1.7	NR	NR	NR	0.2	NR	NR	NR
Grunbaum et al. (2002)	9.8	NR	NR	NR	9.1	NR	NR	NR
Roscoe and Callahan (1985)	10	NR	NR	NR	6	NR	NR	NR
Molidor, Tolman, and Kober (2000)	36	18	NR	NR	37	0.3	NR	NR
Schwartz O'Leary, & Kendziora (1997)	NR	NR	44+	2	NR	NR	16+	3
O'Keefe (1997)	NR	NR	44+	3	NR	NR	39+	13
Watson, Cascardi, Avery-Leaf, and O'Leary (2001)	57	NR	NR	NR	38	NR	NR	NR
Wolfe et al. (2001)	19	43	28	24	28	36	11	37
Jaycox et al. (2004)	21	14	33	8	25	15	20	17
Spencer and Bryant (2000)	8	NR	NR	NR	11	NR	NR	NR
Bergman (1992)	16+	NR	NR	NR	8+	NR	NR	NR

NOTE: NR = not reported; NCVS = National Crime Victimization Survey.

port using violence as self-defense, whereas boys reported using violence to exert control over their dating partner. For both sexes, the strongest predictor in multivariate analyses of the use of violence was experiencing violent victimization, however the relationship was stronger for girls than boys. O'Keefe concluded that this finding suggests girls are more likely than boys to use violence in self-defense. Although examining victimization rather than perpetration, Watson and colleagues' (2001) findings are consistent with this conclusion. In their urban sample, girls were more likely (42%) than boys (26%) to respond to their partner's violence by "fighting back."

In our own ongoing study of 318 Latino youth in Los Angeles high schools, preliminary data show that boys and girls with at least one recent dating experience report similar levels of victimization in the past 6 months: 51% of boys and 49% of girls reported any victimization,

More boys reported perpetrating sexual abuse than girls (37% and 24%, respectively) and more girls reported perpetrating physical abuse than boys (28% and 11%, respectively).

45% of boys and 42% of girls reported experiencing psychological abuse, 25% of boys and 21% of girls reported experiencing physical violence, 15% of boys and 14% of girls reported experiencing sexual violence, and 4% of both genders reported being injured. Boys and girls did

not significantly differ in terms of likelihood to perpetrate any kind of violence (58% of boys and 63% of girls), to perpetrate psychological abuse (55% of boys and 60% of girls), or physical abuse (20% of boys and 33% of girls). They did differ, however, in terms of likelihood of sexual abuse perpetration (17% of boys and 8% of girls) and causing an injury to their date (7% of boys and 3% of girls).

In a study of Canadian students in 10 urban, semirural, and rural Ontario high schools, dating violence was assessed using the Conflict in Adolescents Dating Relationships Inventory (CADRI) (Wolfe, Scott, Reitzel-Jaffe, et al., 2001). Dating relationships were assessed only for those students who had a dating partner for more than one month in the past year.² Regarding victimization, a comparatively large share of girls and boys reported sexual victimizations, 43% of girls and 36% of boys. More boys (28%) than girls (19%) reported being a victim of physical violence by a dating partner during the past year. The groups were similar in their reports of threatening behavior, however more boys (24%) reported such behavior from their dating partners than girls (22%). Perpetration followed a complementary pattern. More boys reported perpetrating sexual abuse than girls (37% and 24%, respectively) and more girls reported perpetrating physical abuse than boys (28% and 11%, respectively). Girls were more likely to report engaging in threatening

behavior toward a dating partner (20%) than boys (17%).

Spencer and Bryant (2000) examined victimization only and found boys to report a higher level of physical violence victimization than girls, 11% and 8%, respectively. Comparatively, on Bergman's (1992) combined measure of physical and sexual victimization, more girls (16%) reported abuse than boys (8%).

In sum, untangling the gender distribution of adolescent dating violence is a complex issue. Studies with somewhat similar samples using similar instruments have produced inconsistent results. Hence, it is unclear the extent to which boys and girls may or may not differ in dating violence perpetration and victimization. Many researchers (e.g., Jackson, 1999; O'Keefe, 1997) noted that it is difficult to measure violence, particularly for female adolescents for whom it is difficult to adequately untangle defensive responses from acts of initial violence against a dating partner. Furthermore, dating violence victimization may have a very different impact on male and female victims. For example, Molidor et al. (2000) found the majority of adolescent boys in their sample (56%) were not hurt at all by the worst reported incident of dating violence victimization, however only 9% of girls reported being unhurt. Nearly one half of girls (48%) reported being "hurt a lot." Of boys, 3% were bruised by their partner compared to 29% of girls. Moreover, the most common reaction of boys to this worst reported incident was to laugh (54%), whereas only 10% of girls found their partner's use of violence similarly funny. For girls, the most common reactions were to cry (40%) and fight back (36%).

Another feature of dating violence that may be important for theoretical and program development is geographic distribution. Studies examining dating violence among adolescents in urban areas tend to find comparably high prevalence rates (e.g., O'Keefe, 1997; Watson et al., 2001), just as NCVS data show partner violence among all ages to be higher in cities (Rennison & Welchans, 2000). Similarly, urban dwellers are likely to experience violence of all types at a higher rate than suburban and rural residents (Ousey, 2000). Given these data, a reasonable hypothesis is that dating violence victimization

might be most prevalent among urban residents, relative to others.

Only two studies, however, have specifically examined geographic distribution. Bergman (1992) compared dating violence among students in three midwestern high schools, one urban, suburban, and rural, differing in racial distribution and economic structure. She found for all categories (physical, sexual, severe, and any violence), suburban students reported experiencing the highest levels of violence, followed by urban and then by rural students. However, little detail is provided about how high schools were selected and the population of the cities containing the selected high schools. The other study, conducted by Spencer and Bryant (2000), however, found no difference by city size for sexual victimization but found a different pattern for physical violence. More rural students (16%) in an upstate New York district reported experiencing physical violence than students in urban and suburban districts (9% each). Spencer and Bryant (2000) advised caution in interpreting these findings because of a low response rate from the districts sampled and because "urban" was defined as cities of 55,000 population. Given the contradictory findings of these studies, more research is needed on whether there is a distinct geographic pattern to dating violence, similar or different from patterns in other forms of violence.

Two studies have examined the relationship of dating violence victimization and experience of maltreatment in the home. Roscoe and Callahan (1985) found that 59% of the 17 adolescents who reported experiencing dating violence also reported experiencing physical violence at the hands of a family member. No other findings including this variable were reported. Wolfe and colleagues (Wolfe, Scott, Wekerle, & Pittman 2001) examined maltreatment, a combined category of sexual abuse, and emotional

Studies examining dating violence among adolescents in urban areas tend to find comparably high prevalence rates. . . . Similarly, urban dwellers are likely to experience violence of all types at a higher rate than suburban and rural residents.

and physical abuse and neglect, in adolescents' family of origin. The results indicated that 30% of nonmaltreated boys compared to 49% of maltreated boys reported experiencing sexual abuse by a dating partner. Among girls, the distribution was 38% and

Similar to findings among adult populations . . . , these findings indicate that the experience of maltreatment in the family of origin may be related to dating violence victimization among adolescents and that this relationship warrants further study.

53%, respectively. For physical abuse by a dating partner, 22% of nonmaltreated boys and 40% of maltreated boys reported this experience. The proportions of both groups were smaller among girls—15% and 25%, respectively. Similar to findings among adult populations (e.g., Straus, 1983), these findings indicate

that the experience of maltreatment in the family of origin may be related to dating violence victimization among adolescents and that this relationship warrants further study.

Another study is worthy of note because it uses three-wave longitudinal data to examine the relationship of adolescent dating violence and exposure "marital violence" in childhood (McCloskey & Lichter, 2003). Mothers and youths from low-income communities within a midsize city were interviewed initially when children were an average of 9 years old and interviewed for a third and final time when youths were an average of 16 years old. Among youths whose mothers reported experiencing partner violence, 18% ($n = 26$) reported threatening or using physical aggression against a dating partner (as measured by items from the Conflict Tactics Scale) compared to 14% ($n = 20$) of youths whose mothers did not report experiencing partner violence. In multivariate analysis, however, this relationship did not emerge as a significant predictor of adolescent dating violence perpetration. Although the current study does contain limitations (e.g., a small sample size and youths who had never dated were combined with those who had dated but had never used aggression against a partner), it provides an example of a unique approach that simultaneously examined adolescent

aggression against dating partners, other peers, and parents.

In multivariate analyses, two studies examined the relationship of justification of the use of violence and observation of violence between parents to perpetration of dating violence among adolescent boys and girls. Schwartz and colleagues (1997) found a significant relationship between these two risk factors and a combined measure of sexual and physical violence perpetration for boys but not for girls. Also using a combined perpetration measure, O'Keefe's (1997) findings were similar for observation of parental violence, that is a significant relationship for boys but not for girls.

The findings of the two studies diverged on justification of violence. The Schwartz et al. (1997) study measured justification of violence against a boyfriend or girlfriend as a single item whereas the O'Keefe (1997) study included separate measures of justification of male-to-female and female-to-male violence. The latter found a significant relationship between perpetration and justification of male-to-female violence among boys. For girls, both justification variables were predictive of perpetration; That is, female perpetration was related to the belief that female-to-male violence was justified but that male-to-female violence was not justified. These findings suggest that future studies should consider using justification of violence measures with gender-specific distinctions, such as those employed by O'Keefe. As O'Keefe explained, it may be that cultural messages about the appropriateness of the use of violence by boys and girls against the other sex are important to the use of violence by boys and girls. Thus, a lack of gender specificity in the items may obscure important predictive relationships.

ADOLESCENT DATING VIOLENCE PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Existing programs and services for adult victims and perpetrators of partner violence far outnumber those designed specifically for adolescents. Although many programs have been developed and implemented specifically for

teens, knowledge about the efficacy of such programs is quite limited because only a handful have undergone evaluation. In a search of the published social science literature, we were able to uncover only a small number of program evaluations. With one exception, these programs were school-based prevention programs intended to influence attitudes and increase student's knowledge of dating violence and some of its consequences. As a result of changes in attitudes and knowledge, the programs expect to influence behavior. Most of the published evaluations have considerable methodological limitations. For example, one evaluation focused on an after-school sexual assault and dating violence prevention program for urban seventh graders that suffered from considerable attrition, inconsistent participation, small sample size (17 participants and 9 comparison students completed both the pre- and posttest), and (because participation was voluntary) was attended largely by girls who were already interested in the topic (Weisz & Black, 2001). Because of such limitations and the small number of published evaluations, very limited few conclusions can be drawn about the impact of teen dating violence prevention programs.

The earliest evaluation we identified in published sources took place in the mid-1980s and was conducted by L. Jones (1998) on the Minnesota School Curriculum Project (MSCP). The education-based prevention program addressed partner violence among adults and youths. The program was expected to reduce the likelihood that participants would experience or perpetrate dating violence by increasing knowledge and changing attitudes about dating violence.

The program was designed as a statewide addition to standard classroom curriculum to be delivered by regular junior and senior high school classroom teachers, with a segment on available community resources delivered by local service providers. Individual school districts were free to mandate the curriculum or leave it to the discretion of schools and/or teachers. The evaluator recruited teachers from first-year training sessions to participate in the evaluation, standardize their curriculum delivery, and make their classrooms available for survey administration. Nearly 225 teachers agreed to par-

ticipate, and a random sample of their classrooms was drawn, stratified by school type (junior or high) and location (urban, suburban, rural). The total number of classrooms in the final sample was not reported.

In the selected classrooms, the curriculum was delivered over five class periods for junior high students. High school students received an additional period focusing specifically on adolescent dating violence. Teachers in sampled classrooms were asked to select a group of matched students to serve as a comparison group. A survey assessing dating violence knowledge, attitudes, and familiarity with available resources was administered to the participants and comparison groups before and after the program (no time periods were reported). No significant differences were found on preintervention measures between the groups.

Among 560 junior high students, mean knowledge scores about partner violence significantly increased relative to controls postintervention. These findings were not affected by gender and school location. A similar pattern was found among the approximately 600 high school students, that is, a significant increase in knowledge among the program participants.

Program participation did not appear to affect attitudes of junior high or high school students relative to controls. Between both age groups, however, significant difference in attitudes emerged by gender. On four of the five posttest items, a greater percentage of female program participants endorsed attitude items in a positive direction (or that desired by program developers) relative to male participants. Finally, the researcher noted a slight improvement postprogram in

On four of the five posttest items, a greater percentage of female program participants endorsed attitude items in a positive direction (or that desired by program developers) relative to male participants.

The findings of this evaluation suggest that such multisession programming may have some positive impact on knowledge but not necessarily on attitudes.

knowledge of available resources but did not indicate whether the increase was significant.

The findings of this evaluation suggest that such multisession programming may have some positive impact on knowledge but not necessarily on attitudes. It remains an open question about whether the program's impact on knowledge is lasting or important for behavior.

The program's goal was to prevent adolescents from perpetrating or experiencing dating violence by increasing knowledge about dating violence, changing attitudes that might tend to support dating violence, and promoting "interpersonal strengths such as self-esteem, effective communication, and help-seeking."

tend to support dating violence, and promoting "interpersonal strengths such as self-esteem, effective communication, and help-seeking" (Macgowan, 1997, p. 225). This program was similar in delivery and length to the Minnesota program; five 1-hr class periods delivered by regular classroom teachers over one week. Unlike the Minnesota program, the school students were largely African American (72%) and Hispanic (18%), though the racial distribution of the sample was not reported.

Classrooms were stratified by grade and placement level, then randomly selected to receive the program and to serve as the wait-list comparison group. Pre-existing differences between the 241 program group students and 199 comparison group students were statistically controlled in analyses. Surveys were administered in program and comparison classrooms the Friday before and Monday after the intervention. The instrument consisted of 22 items

covering knowledge of dating violence, attitudes about abuse, and attitudes about responding to violence in relationships.

Initial results were reported as a total mean score, combining knowledge and attitude items. The mean scores of program participants significantly differed from controls and changed in the positive direction. These results did not differ by placement level, gender, or grade level. Within the program group, there were no differences between boys and girls overall. A significant difference, however, was found between the mean scores of advanced placement boys compared to advanced placement girls, and both groups relative to other students, with better results among the advanced placement students. In sum, it appears that at least in the short run, the program had positive impacts among participants and that some students may benefit more from this program model than other students.

In another single school study, conducted by Avery-Leaf and colleagues in Long Island, New York, a dating violence curriculum was introduced into required 11th- and 12th-grade health classes (Avery-Leaf, Cascardi, O'Leary, & Cano, 1997). The program was designed based on the perspective that dating violence is the result of individual attitudes that support such behavior and a deficit of communication skills, but also a cultural context supporting gender inequality. The program intended to reduce dating violence perpetration and victimization through changes in attitudes supporting violence, promotion of equality in dating relationships, improving communication skills, and education about resources available for victims.

One half of all health classes were randomly assigned to participate in the program, and the remaining served as controls. Of the 90 control group students and 102 program group students, 80% were White and 11% were Hispanic. In the control condition, students completed an initial survey and completed the same survey 8 school days later. To reduce bias from interaction between students outside the classroom, the program began after the administration of the second survey to the control classrooms. The program consisted of a five classroom-session

curriculum delivered by the regular classroom teacher focused on increasing knowledge about the dynamics of dating violence, conflict reduction skills, and resource availability. The length of time between the pre- and postsurvey administration did not differ between the two groups.

The impact of the program was measured using the Justification of Interpersonal Violence Questionnaire, capturing views about acceptability of gender-specific violence for conflict resolution, and the Justification of Dating Jealousy and Violence Scale, composed of 10 gender-specific vignettes involving jealousy, coercion, and physical aggression between dating partners. A Social Desirability Scale was included, and no significant correlations were found. There was no significant change in the controls, however the program group showed significant positive change on items relating to justification of male-to-female interpersonal violence. No differences emerged for female-to-male interpersonal violence or on the Justification of Dating Jealousy and Violence Scale. Thus, the findings indicate some program success in reducing participants' acceptance of violence as a male conflict-resolution tactic in dating relationships. The lack of other significant findings led the researchers to speculate that more sensitive measures of dating violence attitudes may be necessary in future research because more than one half the students in both conditions preintervention indicated it was "never acceptable" to push, punch, or hit a dating partner (Avery-Leaf et al., 1997).

Another evaluation sought to examine the efficacy of a short-versus long-form of a dating violence prevention program for 10th graders in two urban high schools in Quebec City, Canada (Lavoie, Vezina, Piche, & Boivin, 1995). The program expected to reduce dating violence victimization and perpetration among participants by seeking to change attitudes condoning the use of control and violence against a partner, increase knowledge about dating violence, and to promote egalitarian intimate relationships. The short-form program lasted two class periods (120 min to 150 min total) and involved instruction intended to increase knowledge about healthy relationships and how to identify

abuse. The long-form program was roughly equivalent to the amount of program exposure in the Minnesota and Long Island evaluations; four class periods between 4 hr and 5 hr total. In the additional two periods, students watched a film and participated in a writing exercise intended to reinforce the lessons of the program. Unlike the Minnesota and Long Island programs, representatives of a community organization and not the regular classroom teacher delivered the curriculum. The two participating schools were randomly assigned to the long form (279 students) and short form (238 students) of the program, and all classrooms participated. No comparison group was drawn from either school. Program impact was measured using a 25-item instrument assessing knowledge and attitudes before and 1 month after program participation.

The results indicated no difference overall in attitudes by program length, that is students improved at both schools following the program. Although male and female attitude scores improved, girls at both schools scored higher on the attitude items relative to boys. Attitude scores for girls in the long-form program showed greater positive change than girls in the short form. On the knowledge measures, students at both schools showed positive change on five of the nine items, and no gender difference was detected. Counterintuitive findings emerged around the impact of program length; that is, students in the short form, compared to the long form, showed greater positive change on four of the nine items. Thus, program length did not differentially affect student attitudes overall, and a shorter program produced greater improvement in knowledge than a longer program. Only girls' attitudes seem to benefit from a longer program. The researchers point out that preprogram differences in knowledge and differences between the schools may be responsible for the unexpected findings. For both program lengths, the positive improvement in attitude and knowledge scores pre- and postprogram persisted 1 month after program participation. In the absence of comparison group data, however, these results cannot be taken as solid evidence about the efficacy of the program.

In another study, the London Secondary Interventions Project on Violence in Intimate Relationships was delivered to all schools within the city of London, Ontario (Jaffe, Sudermann, Reitzel, & Killip, 1992). The program expected to reduce dating violence among participants by changing attitudes that justify such abuse, by increasing knowledge about the causes and consequences of dating violence, and by increasing knowledge about available community resources.

The first four high schools to undergo the intervention participated in the evaluation. In two of the high schools, students attended a 90-min educational multimedia assembly, followed by 1 hr structured, individual classroom discussions. This is roughly equivalent to the length of the Quebec City short-form program. Two schools employed the half-day intervention but added an additional half-day of classroom-level student working sessions focused on the development of a dating violence action plan for their school. A random classroom sample was drawn stratified by intensity level and grade level, to select one sixth of the classrooms in each school, a total of 737 students.

Program impact was measured using a 48-item instrument administered approximately 1 week prior to and following the intervention. To measure longer term program impact, an additional follow-up administration of the same survey occurred 5 to 7 weeks later but within only two schools. No comparison groups were used.

Results were presented in the form of individual item changes with no summary measures. Paired *t* tests on the pre- and posttest and follow-up test revealed a host of changes in the positive direction desired by the program developers but also in the undesirable or negative direction.³ Among the nine knowledge items showing significant change for students overall, four items changed in a positive direction, but five items changed in a negative direction. Three of the five negative changes are observed between the 1-week postintervention survey and the follow-up survey, indicating that knowledge gained from the intervention was not sustained over time. On the eight knowledge measures where boys showed significant

change pre- and postintervention, five were in the positive direction and three in the negative direction. Comparatively, girls showed significant change on seven knowledge items and all in the positive direction.

On the 19 attitude items, there was no significant change overall or among girls, however there was change in attitude among boys; negative change on four items in the postintervention survey related to acceptance of rationalizations for date rape. On the behavioral intention items, significant change is evenly split for all students in the positive and negative direction, however the majority of the negative change was seen between the 1-week postintervention survey and follow-up survey. Again, only boys showed a negative change (on one item) but also showed positive change on two others. Girls showed significant positive change on three items.

Overall, the evaluators concluded that their results are "very encouraging." This conclusion, however, seems somewhat overly optimistic given that observed significant changes are almost evenly split between the positive and negative directions. Of particular concern is the gender distribution of negative changes; that is, it is only among boys that negative changes are observed; girls either show no change on items or change in a positive direction. In the absence of comparison group data, the researchers speculated that this may be a defensive reaction of boys to the intervention. Moreover, students at one half the schools received a double dose of the program relative to the other students (full-day vs. half-day), however the published results do not distinguish program intensity level. Relatedly, classrooms in only two schools completed the follow-up survey, however no information is provided about program intensity level at these schools and whether follow-up results differ by program intensity, as would be expected. In sum, given these limitations it is difficult to draw conclusions about program impact or the longevity of any potential impacts based on the published results of this evaluation.

Probably the most well known evaluation was conducted by Foshee of the Safe Dates program (Foshee et al., 1996, 1998, 2000). Funded by

the CDC, this study differs from others in that it includes behavioral measures and an extended follow-up period (1 year). The Safe Dates program seeks to reduce dating violence among participants by changing attitudes that condone partner violence and promote gender stereotyping, building conflict management skills, and increasing knowledge about community resources. It consisted of school and community activities. The latter involved a host of service provider trainings and increases in community resources available to adolescents experiencing dating violence, such as a crisis hotline. Eighth- and ninth-grade classrooms were matched in 14 public schools and randomly assigned to participate in the program (955 students) or control condition (1,010 students). Control and program condition students were exposed to the community activities. Program condition students also participated in school activities that included a school play about dating violence, a 10-session curriculum delivered by the regular classroom teacher, and a student poster contest.

The impact of the program was measured using a 116-item instrument measuring dating violence victimization and perpetration and variables thought to mediate dating violence, such as dating violence norms, conflict management, and gender stereotyping. Dating violence was defined as psychological abuse, sexual violence, and physical violence. Students in both groups completed the instrument before implementation of the program and 1 month following program completion. Lasting impact of the program was measured through a third administration of the instrument 1 year after program completion.

Preprogram differences were not found between the program and control condition. One month following the program, significant positive change was observed among the participants relative to controls on the theoretically mediating variables. At the 1-year follow-up period, however only significant differences in awareness of services for victim and perpetrators persisted.

Between the baseline and 1-month program follow-up, there were no significant differences between groups in reports of dating violence

victimization. Significant differences were detected, however, in perpetration of psychological and sexual violence and violence in a current relationship. Physical violence perpetration also declined among program participants but not significantly so. Among those with no exposure to previous abuse, participants reported perpetrating significantly less psychological abuse at follow-up than controls. No significant differences emerged on the behavioral items at the one-year follow-up.

Although short term, these results appear to be positive, however there is reason to question what they may represent. On the behavioral items, students were asked lifetime prevalence questions: "How many times have you *ever* [emphasis added] done the following things to a person you have been on a date with?" (Foshee et al., 1996, p. 42). Because the program cannot literally undo a participant's past actions, a positive result should indicate no change in lifetime prevalence. Thus, the reported decrease in lifetime prevalence may be the result of a decreased willingness to report perpetration, perhaps because of decreased acceptance or increased stigmatization of such acts.

Unique among the evaluated programs is the Youth Relationships Project designed and evaluated by Wolfe and colleagues (Wekerle & Wolfe, 1999; Wolfe, Scott, Wekerle, & Pittman, 2001; Wolfe et al., 2003). It was delivered in a community rather than a school setting and targeted at-risk adolescents rather than teens in general. The program was intended for youths with a history of family maltreatment who were referred by one of seven child protective agencies. Over eighteen 2-hr sessions, the program was expected to prevent dating violence among participants through education about the origins of abusive behavior, changing attitudes that may condone the use of

One month following the program, significant positive change was observed among the participants relative to controls on the theoretically mediating variables. At the 1-year follow-up period, however only significant differences in awareness of services for victim and perpetrators persisted.

violence, skill building, and increasing social competence.

The program was delivered in mixed gender groups of 6 to 10 participants. Although the evaluation is somewhat limited by its small sample size, it employed an experimental design, comparatively lengthy follow-up period, and behavioral outcome measures. The sample consisted of largely White, low-income youths aged 14 to 16 years, 60% of whom were not living with either natural or adoptive parent. Youths were drawn from urban, suburban, and rural areas. Youths were randomly assigned to the program ($n = 96$) or control ($n = 62$) condition. The latter group received standard services from the child protective service agencies. All participated in a baseline interview and completed written assessments of their childhood trauma experiences, dating violence exposure, alcohol use, relationship skills, and emotional distress. During the study period, youths were contacted twice per month, and those reporting a dating relationship of at least 1 month completed a questionnaire about dating violence victimization and perpetration. Thus, the number of assessments varied, with an average of 4.7 per youth.

Although youths in both groups reported exposure to dating violence at baseline, results from the 16-month follow-up period indicated that program participation significantly reduced physical dating violence perpetration relative to controls, however no effect was found for threatening behavior.

program group process showed less reduction in physical violence than those rated as less engaged. Attendance did not influence the results, and the intervention had no impact on development of healthy relationship skills. Experiencing threatening behavior, physical, and emo-

tional abuse by a dating partner also declined from baseline levels among program participants relative to controls. In sum, the results of the current study indicate support for the program model and its use with at-risk youths.

Overall, the body of program evaluation literature examining dating violence is very limited, and results of the available studies are often hard to interpret. Several lack comparison groups, were conducted in only one site, and contain very brief follow-up periods. Moreover, results of the available studies are inconsistent; some indicating positive change while others indicate no or even negative change. Clearly, more, carefully designed evaluation studies are necessary before conclusions can be drawn about the efficacy of dating violence programs for adolescents in general. Although promising, the positive findings for a community-based intervention for at-risk youths must be replicated before conclusions can be drawn about the potential efficacy of this program model.

Three ongoing efforts, sponsored by the CDC, are intended to add to the existing knowledge.⁴ The first is an arts-based intervention program geared toward predominately African American middle-school adolescents in Baltimore, Maryland. It represents a collaboration between Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing, the Historic East Baltimore Community Action Coalition, NuWorld Art Ensemble Violence Prevention Theatre Project, George Washington University School of Public Health, and the House of Ruth. The prevention program is a community- and school-based program intended to prevent dating violence among participants by changing school culture with regard to violence and by promoting healthy relationships. The prevention program includes a variety of arts-based activities, dating violence prevention curricular components, violence prevention and early intervention student support groups, and teacher and staff training on dating violence prevention.

The evaluation will include baseline, intermediate, and long-term outcomes contrasting three intervention schools with two comparison schools. It will use group (student and teacher surveys) and school-wide (climate of the school) measures pre- and postintervention. In

addition, youth who participate directly in the theater, visual arts, or support group project components will be compared with youth in their own school and in comparison schools on a survey about attitudes and experiences and related to violence.

The second CDC-funded project is a partnership between RAND Corporation and Break the Cycle, involving the evaluation of a prevention and early-intervention program targeting ninth-grade Latino teens in Los Angeles. Break the Cycle's Ending Violence program and early intervention services focus on legal rights and responsibilities. The program is intended to prevent dating violence through changing personal and peer norms that condone dating violence, increasing knowledge about legal rights and responsibilities of dating violence, encouraging help seeking, and providing information about legal options, within a program that strives for cultural competence with the youth it serves. The prevention program is delivered by attorneys and focuses on legal aspects of partner violence, and early intervention services are made available to students within Break the Cycle's confidential legal services program. RAND's evaluation of this program is currently underway. The process evaluation describes the structural elements of the program, measures fidelity to the intervention, and tracks participants' use of services over time. The outcome evaluation employs a randomized experimental design: Tracks within schools are randomly assigned to a wait-list control group or to the Ending Violence prevention curriculum, and changes in knowledge, attitudes, help-seeking, and victimization and perpetration of dating violence will be examined immediately after the program and again 6 months later.

The third project, the University of Arizona Promoting Healthy Relationships project, aims to address the problems of intimate partner violence and to encourage healthy relationships among minority youth in Arizona communities, including rural Apache reservations. This project incorporates a dating violence prevention curriculum within the context of a comprehensive youth development program. Therefore, in addition to the dating violence prevention curriculum, youth development

programs, such as mentoring, tutoring, and after school or weekend recreational activities, are included. It is hypothesized that implementing the prevention curriculum within the context of a positive youth development program will have the greatest impact on the prevention and reduction of adolescent dating violence.

COMPLICATING ISSUES OF STUDYING ADOLESCENT DATING VIOLENCE

Despite the clear indication that dating violence is present among adolescents, researchers have focused far more attention on partner violence among adults and college students. Many more descriptive studies have been conducted with adults, and far more interventions have been designed (and evaluated) for adult and college-age victims and perpetrators.

Several factors may contribute to the slow accumulation of studies examining dating violence in adolescence and even slower accumulation of evaluation research examining dating violence programs for teens. These factors can be divided into definitional issues, human participants' protection issues, and general legal issues relating to minors.

First, defining who is a dating partner is difficult for any age group but particularly so among adolescents. In the existing literature, researchers often define partner violence as violence between married or cohabitating partners, however among adolescents these relationship types are uncommon. Researchers interested in adolescents must

Researchers interested in adolescents must operationalize partner violence in the context of noncohabitating relationships that vary widely in their level of intimacy, role expectations, and duration.

operationalize partner violence in the context of noncohabitating relationships that vary widely in their level of intimacy, role expectations, and duration. For example, a teen dating partner can represent the traditional concept of a long-term boyfriend or girlfriend who may or may not be sexually active, however "dates" may also take the form of a partner for single, planned events (e.g., school dance), a sexual

partner in a casual unplanned encounter, a sexual partner in a series of casual encounters, or members of a group who regularly socialize together. Therefore, researchers face considerable challenges in operationalizing teen dating relationships in a manner that captures their variation in form and meaning among adolescents. Furthermore, this variation complicates the design of intervention programs intended to help teens recognize, report, and prevent dating violence because such programs must address a broad range of relationships.

In addition, teens tend to use specific terms to describe categories of dating relationships (e.g., terms reported recently in our ongoing study by Los Angeles Latino youths were "hanging out," "hooking up," "being sprung," "being friends with privileges," and "crushing on someone"), and these terms undoubtedly vary by region

Thus, relative to adults, research involving adolescents may require a more resource-intensive methodology for instrument development or revision of existing instruments, particularly in multisite studies, to capture regional and ethnic variation in adolescent terminology.

and ethnicity. Thus, relative to adults, research involving adolescents may require a more resource-intensive methodology for instrument development or revision of existing instruments, particularly in multisite studies, to capture regional and ethnic variation in adolescent terminology.

Second, requirements for human participants' protection in studies involving minors are more stringent in general when they involve youths rela-

tive to adults; even more so for studies that focus on violence. These requirements restrict potential research designs and may reduce researcher interest in examining adolescent dating violence. When studies are undertaken, active parental consent is often required for youth participation. This may result in a reduced response rate and the exclusion of the most vulnerable youths in particular. Participation in intervention programs may also require parental consent, potentially reducing access for youths who are in need of services.

Third, the laws governing confidentiality of reports of dating violence differ across states. In California, child abuse laws apply to any type of violence or abuse inflicted upon a minor regardless of victim-offender relationship, though *mutual affray between minors*, a term defined in case law as playground-type fights between nonintimates, is excluded. Child abuse laws have been interpreted to encompass dating violence among youths. Because California law also mandates that certain professionals, including researchers, report knowledge or suspicion of child abuse to law enforcement, identified data on dating violence victimization cannot be collected without assuming the legal obligation to report such incidents. Clearly, this requirement places extreme limitations on longitudinal studies and evaluation designs for prevention and intervention programs involving teens. Moreover, programs are under the same requirement to report dating violence to authorities, which complicates the provision of services to teens who wish to keep their victimization confidential. The one exception is a program, such as the Break the Cycle program, staffed by attorneys that can promise confidentiality of private conversations between the attorney and students through attorney-client privilege.

Finally, the legal status of dating violence among adolescents varies from state to state. In some states, "domestic violence" legislation applies only to individuals 18 years and older in certain types of intimate, often-cohabitating relationships, whereas laws and available legal remedies apply to younger ages in other states. For example, under Washington law the same criminal laws and police procedures apply for noncohabitating dating partners involving individuals 16 years and older (under RWC 10.99.020), however in Missouri domestic violence legislation applies only to adults (under MO 565.063). These differences in legal definitions can restrict eligibility for services and protections, and thus the types of prevention and intervention programs that may be established and evaluated.

In sum, challenges presented by the study of partner violence in general are magnified when

studying adolescent populations. These challenges however are not insurmountable. For example, in our own ongoing evaluation of a dating violence program for Los Angeles high school students, we addressed the human participants' protection concerns by devoting considerable attention to recruitment issues, including parent consent, and working actively with the schools to increase the rate of return of parental consent forms. We also made the portion of the questionnaire that detailed dating violence victimization and perpetration anonymous to avoid California's mandatory reporting requirement.

CONCLUSIONS

Study of violence between adolescent dating partners is still scant, and much more work in this area is needed before we will have an understanding of the size and distribution of the problem. A few very general conclusions can still be drawn. Among these conclusions is that a range of violent and abusive behaviors take place within the context of adolescent dating relationships and that boys and girls are perpetrators and victims. Prior maltreatment may increase the risk of dating violence, and justification of violence and witnessing parental violence may increase perpetration of violence, at least among boys. Although existing dating violence prevention programs may have some

impact on attitudes and beliefs related to partner violence, it is unknown whether such changes are lasting or have an influence on behavior during adolescents and into adulthood. However many important questions remain unanswered, in particular the identification of the risk factors for dating violence (e.g., gender, geography, prior experiences).

Simple empirical description is needed to inform theoretical and program development. For example, some research indicates that female and male adolescents use violence against a partner for different reasons (e.g. O'Keefe, 1997). This issue needs to be carefully studied to determine the extent to which it is consistently empirically supported, and if so whether it might suggest differing approaches to prevention and intervention programs for boys and girls; that is, more basic research can help shine light on whether a single curriculum, delivered in mixed gender groups seems indicated or whether gender-specific groups and curricula seem more well suited to address the nature of the underlying problem.

That is, more basic research can help shine light on whether a single curriculum, delivered in mixed gender groups seems indicated or whether gender-specific groups and curricula seem more well suited to address the nature of the underlying problem

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE, POLICY, AND RESEARCH

- More descriptive research is needed to gain a foundation of knowledge about the phenomenon of violence between adolescent dating partners, including study risk and protection factors beyond gender.
- A better understanding of the validity of adolescent reports of dating violence victimization and perpetration is needed, including factors that facilitate and impede reporting of these experiences, so that studies can use consistent and valid methods of collecting data.
- Future descriptive research should not only provide bivariate distributions of risk and protective factors but should also examine these factors as part of multivariate analyses.
- Before initiating dating violence programs, developers should partner with researchers to build in an evaluation component, including preparations for necessary data collection, careful consideration of the possibility use of random assignment, and long-term follow-up of participants and controls.
- Where barriers to collecting identified data exist, evaluators of dating violence prevention programs should seek to develop innovative methods of measuring the behavioral impact of participation on victimization and perpetration.

NOTES

1. The published study reports that questionnaires were distributed to 635 students, however the researchers do not present the number of students who completed the questionnaire and how many students who reported ever being on a date, making them eligible to answer the dating violence questions. Thus, overall prevalence estimates cannot be derived from the published data.

2. In the published work, the researchers do not report the overall percentage of the sample that inflicted or suffered dating violence, and adequate data are not provided to derive this percentage. Three separate gender-specific dating violence measures are reported, however adequate data are not provided to combine these three measures into an overall gender-specific percentage of dating violence victimization and perpetration.

3. There appears to be a mistake in Table 6 that reports the individual items where significant change occurred in either direction. Each item is reported in the left-hand column, followed by three columns reporting significant change overall, for girls, and for boys. On page 143 for the knowledge items, there are more results reported in the overall column than the number of items listed. It is our interpretation that the double asterisks in the overall column between items 16 and 18 is not intended to appear by the authors because it is not followed by reported results in the female and male columns. Thus, we have disregarded this double asterisk in our discussion of the findings.

4. The studies are sponsored under the CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention's Demonstration Projects for the Early Intervention and Prevention of Sexual Violence and Intimate Partner Violence Among Racial and Ethnic Minority Populations.

REFERENCES

- Avery-Leaf, S., Cascardi, M., O'Leary, K. D., & Cano, A. (1997). Efficacy of a dating violence prevention program on attitudes justifying aggression. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 21*(1), 11-17.
- Bergman, L. (1992). Dating violence among high school students. *Social Work, 37*(1), 21-27.
- Campbell, J. C. (1992). "If I can't have you, no one can": Power and control in homicide of female partners. In J. Radford & D. E. H. Russell (Eds.), *Femicide: The politics of women killing* (pp. 99-113). New York: Twayne Publishers.
- Federal Bureau of Investigation. (1993-1999). *Supplementary homicide reports (SHR)*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.
- Finkelhor, D., & Ormrod, R. (1999). Reporting crimes against juveniles. *Juvenile Justice Bulletin*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.
- Foshee, V. A., Bauman, K. E., Arriaga, X. B., Helms, R. W., Koch, G. G., & Linder, G. F. (1998). An evaluation of Safe Dates, an adolescent dating violence prevention program. *American Journal of Public Health, 88*(1), 45-50.
- Foshee, V. A., Bauman, K. E., Greene, W. F., Koch, G. G., Linder, G. F., & MacDougall, J. E. (2000). The Safe Dates program: 1-year follow-up results. *American Journal of Public Health, 90*(10), 1619-1622.
- Foshee, V. A., Linder, G. F., Bauman, K. E., Langwick, S. A., Arriaga, X. B., Heath, et al. (1996). The Safe Dates project: Theoretical basis, evaluation design, and selected baseline findings. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 12*(5 Suppl), S39-S47.
- Gordon, L. (1988). *Heroes of their own lives: the politics and history of family violence*. New York: Viking Penguin.
- Gfroerer, J., Wright, D., & Kopstein, A. (1997). Prevalence of youth substance use: The impact of methodological differences between two national surveys. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence, 47*, 19-30.
- Grunbaum, J. A., Kann, L., Kinchen, S. A., Williams, B., Ross, J. G., Lowry, R., et al. (2002). Youth risk behavior surveillance—United States, 2001. *Surveillance Summaries, 51*(SS-4), 1-21.
- Halsted, J. B. (1992). Domestic violence: Its legal definitions. In E. S. Buzawa & C. G. Buzawa (Eds.), *Domestic violence: The changing criminal justice response* (pp. 143-160). Westport, CT: Auburn House.
- Jackson, S. M. (1999). Issues in the dating violence research: A review of the literature. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 4*(2), 233-247.
- Jaffe, P. G., Sudermann, M., Reitzel, D., & Killip, S. M. (1992). An evaluation of a secondary school primary prevention program on violence in intimate relationships. *Violence and Victims, 7*(2), 129-146.
- Jaycox, L. H. (2004). Unpublished preliminary data from the Break The Cycle evaluation study. Arlington, VA: RAND.
- Jones, L. (1998). The Minnesota School Curriculum Project: A statewide domestic violence prevention project in secondary schools. In B. Levy (Ed.), *Dating violence: Young women in danger* (pp. 258-266). Seattle, WA: Seal Press.
- Kindermann, C., Lynch, J., & Cantor, D. (1997, April). *National Crime Victimization Survey: Effects of the redesign on victimization estimates*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Lavoie, F., Vezina, L., Piche, C., & Boivin, M. (1995). Evaluation of a prevention program for violence in teen dating relationships. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 10*(4), 516-524.
- Macgowan, M. J. (1997). An evaluation of a dating violence prevention program for middle school students. *Violence and Victims, 12*(3), 223-235.
- McCloskey, L. A., & Lichter, E. L. (2003). The contribution of marital violence to adolescent aggression across different relationships. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 18*(4), 390-412.
- Molidor, C., Tolman, R. M., & Kober, J. (2000). Gender and contextual factors in adolescent dating violence. *Prevention Research, 7*(1), 1-4.
- O'Keefe, M. (1997). Predictors of dating violence among high school students. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 12*(4), 546-568.
- Ousey, G. C. (2000). Explaining regional and urban variation in crime: A review of research. In G. LaFree (Ed.),

- The nature of crime: Continuity and change* (pp. 261-308). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice.
- Pleck, E. (1987). *Domestic tyranny: The making of American social policy against family violence from colonial times to the present*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Reiss, A. J., & Roth, J. A. (1993). *Understanding and preventing violence*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Rennison, C. M., & Welchans, S. (2000). *Intimate partner violence*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Roberts, A. R. (1996). Introduction: Myths and realities regarding battered women. In A. R. Roberts (Ed.), *Helping battered women: New perspectives and remedies* (pp. 3-12). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Roscoe, B., & Callahan, J. E. (1985). Adolescents' self-report of violence in families and dating relations. *Adolescence*, 20(79), 545-553.
- Schwartz, M., O'Leary, S. G., & Kendziora, K. T. (1997). Dating aggression among high school students. *Violence and Victims*, 12(4), 295-305.
- Spencer, G. A., & Bryant, S. A. (2000). Dating violence: a comparison of rural, suburban, and urban teens. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 27(5), 302-305.
- Straus, M. A. (1979). Measuring intrafamily conflict and violence: The Conflict Tactics Scales. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 41, 75-88.
- Straus, M. A. (1983). Ordinary violence, child abuse, and wife beating: What do they have in common? In D. Finklehor, R. J. Gelles, G. T. Hotaling, & M. A. Straus (Eds.), *The dark side of families: Current family violence research* (pp. 213-234). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- U.S. Attorney's General Task Force on Family Violence. (1984). *Final report*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.
- Watson, J. M., Cascardi, M., Avery-Leaf, S., & O'Leary, K. D. (2001). High school students' responses to dating aggression. *Violence and Victims*, 16(3), 339-348.
- Weisz, A. N., & Black, B. M. (2001). Evaluating a sexual assault and dating violence prevention program for urban youth. *Social Work Research*, 25(2), 89-100.
- Wekerle, C., & Wolfe, D. A. (1999). Dating violence in mid-adolescence: theory, significance, and emerging prevention initiatives. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 19(4), 435-456.
- Wolfe, D. A., Scott, K., Reitzel-Jaffe, D., Wekerle, C., Grasley, C., & Straatman, A.-L. (2001). Development and validation of the Conflict in Adolescent Dating Relationships Inventory. *Psychological Assessment*, 13(2), 277-293.
- Wolfe, D. A., Scott, K., Wekerle, C., & Pittman, A.-L. (2001). Child maltreatment: Risk of adjustment problems and dating violence in adolescence. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 40(3), 282-289.
- Wolfe, D. A., Wekerle, C., Scott, K., Straatman, A. L., Grasley, C., & Reitzel-Jaffe, D. (2003). Dating violence prevention with at-risk youth: A controlled outcome evaluation. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 71(2), 279-291.

SUGGESTED FUTURE READINGS

- Foshee, V. A., Bauman, K. E., Arriaga, X. B., Helms, R. W., Koch, G. G., & Linder, G. F. (1998). An evaluation of Safe Dates, an adolescent dating violence prevention program. *American Journal of Public Health*, 88(1), 45-50.
- Jackson, S. M. (1999). Issues in the dating violence research: A review of the literature. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 4(2), 233-247.
- Levy, B. (Ed.). (1998). *Dating violence: Young women in danger*. Seattle, WA: Seal Press.
- Pittman, A.-L., Wolfe, D. A., & Wekerle, C. (2000). Strategies for evaluating dating violence prevention programs. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment, and Trauma*, 4(1), 217-238.



Laura J. Hickman, Ph.D., is a criminologist and associate behavioral scientist at RAND Corporation. Her research interests focus on violence against women, sentencing and corrections, and policing. Her work is primarily in the area of policy responses to domestic violence. Her previous work includes an assessment of factors influencing the help-seeking behavior of repeat female victims of domestic violence. She has also assessed implementation of legislation intended to increase the application of criminal justice sanctions to perpetrators of domestic violence. She has also worked with a number of public and private agencies to establish and strengthen interagency referrals and collaboration around the issue of domestic violence. In those efforts she designed and monitored the implementation of a specialized domestic violence supervision unit for parole and probation offenders for the Lane County, Oregon Department of Community Corrections. Her current work includes an assessment of military-civilian cooperation around developing effective responses to domestic violence occurring in military families.



Lisa H. Jaycox, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist and behavioral scientist at RAND Corporation. She has combined clinical and research expertise in the area of mental health and behavioral reactions to a wide variety of traumatic life events, and interventions used to alleviate them. She has evaluated clinical prevention and treatment programs for women who were sexually or otherwise criminally assaulted and had post-traumatic stress disorder, has examined the mental health consequences of violent injury via community violence, has developed and evaluated of a school-based early intervention program for children exposed to community violence,

and has examined the impact of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in a national probability sample. She is currently leading one of the demonstration projects described in this article, funded by the CDC to evaluate an intimate partner violence prevention program for Latino youth.



Jessica Aronoff, Esq., is an attorney and associate director at Break the Cycle, a non-profit organization whose mission is to end domestic violence by working proactively with youth. Break the Cycle furthers this mission by providing young people, ages 12 to 22

years, with preventive law-based education, free legal services, advocacy and support. She oversees the design, implementation, growth, and evaluation of Break the Cycle's domestic violence prevention and early intervention services. She began as program director at Break the Cycle in 1998 when she was awarded an Equal Justice Fellowship from the National Association for Public Interest Law. Her prior work includes extensive work in the areas of children's policy and advocacy, research, and direct services related to violence against women and other women's legal issues, advocacy on behalf of homeless and runaway youth and homeless adults, and educating and mentoring incarcerated and at-risk youth.