

Gender's Role in Exposure to Interparental Violence, Acceptance of Violence, Self-Efficacy, and Physical Teen Dating Violence Among Quebec Adolescents

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH ABOUT?

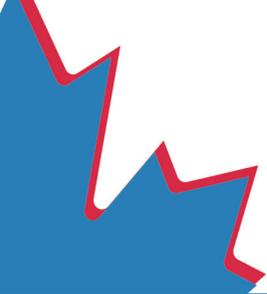
Past studies have shown an association between exposure to interparental violence (violence between parents) and perpetration of teen dating violence. Interparental violence may impact young people's social development in a number of ways. Youth who are exposed to interparental violence may come to believe that aggression is normal in relationships, an attitude that may increase their likelihood of perpetrating or being victimized by dating violence in adolescence. This study examined whether gender and an acceptance of violence play a role in this so-called "intergenerational transmission of violence" (i.e., youth repeating patterns of violence that they witness among their parents).

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

- This study examined youth's attitudes about relationship violence perpetrated by girls towards boys, and relationship violence perpetrated by boys towards girls.
- Exposure to interparental violence was linked with more accepting attitudes towards violence perpetrated by girls.
- Acceptance of violence perpetrated by girls was linked to boys' and girls' experiences of being victimized by dating violence, and to girls' perpetration of dating violence.
- The findings lend support to a model of intergenerational transmission of violence, where exposure to interparental violence was linked to more accepting attitudes about violence in relationships, which was linked to experiences of perpetrating or being victimized by dating violence.

WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS DO?

The researchers used data from a large study conducted in Quebec on the topic of youth's romantic relationships. Thirty-four Quebec high schools participated. Data were collected at two time points, six months apart. This study included about 2,500 participants who were ages 14 to 17, and who had been in a dating relationship in the previous six months. Participants answered questions about their experiences of physical violence in their dating relationships, exposure to interparental violence, self-efficacy to disclose dating violence (confidence in one's ability to seek help) and their acceptance of dating violence (attitudes that dating violence is acceptable).



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WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS FIND?

About 64% of participants reported some acceptance of violence perpetrated by girls in dating relationships, compared to 25% reporting some acceptance of violence perpetrated by boys. For girls, exposure to interparental violence predicted acceptance of dating violence perpetrated by girls, which in turn predicted their involvement in perpetrating or being victimized by physical dating violence. For boys, exposure to interparental violence also predicted acceptance of dating violence perpetrated by girls, which in turn predicted the experience of being victimized. Self-efficacy to disclose dating violence was not influenced by exposure to interparental violence. Self-efficacy also did not predict greater experiences of dating violence.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS RESEARCH?

Changing youth's accepting attitudes about dating violence may be an important target for dating violence prevention programs. Particularly, programs may need to ensure that they include messaging not only about violence perpetrated by boys (which youth generally find unacceptable) but violence perpetrated by girls, as well. Youth with histories of exposure to interparental violence may be at particularly at risk for developing an acceptance of relationship violence. Prevention program developers and facilitators should recognize that their participants may have such histories. As such, their programs should include material that is sensitive to these experiences (i.e., trauma-informed) and which help youth develop healthier attitudes about interpersonal relationships.

ABOUT THE RESEARCHERS

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adolescent dating violence; interparental violence; interpersonal violence

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