



Intimate partner violence–related fatalities among US youth aged 0–24 years, 2014–2018

WHAT IS THE RESEARCH ABOUT?

Intimate partner violence (IPV) consists of physical, psychological, and sexual abuse in the context of a romantic relationship. In some cases, IPV is predictive of a violent death such as intimate partner homicide, homicide of the IPV victim's family members, IPV-related suicide, and death due to legal intervention (e.g., killed by on-duty police). Unfortunately, millions of children and youth are exposed to IPV annually and in rare cases are killed in the context of IPV. IPV-related deaths also disproportionately affect racial minority youth. The aim of the current research was to provide a comprehensive understanding of IPV-related deaths among children and youth aged 0–24.

WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?

- IPV is a substantial contributor to violent deaths among people aged 0–24 years in the (6.5% of violent deaths), particularly among racial minority youth. For context, the IPV-related death rate (0.35 per 100,000 persons) is higher than the death rate for drowning (0.32), pregnancy-related death (0.30), and diabetes (0.22) among this age group. Additionally, this rate is likely an underestimate due to lack of consistent assessment of IPV-related death.
- Rates of IPV-related homicides and suicides are very similar, suggesting that IPV plays a bigger role in death by suicide than previously thought.
- The researchers in this study did not examine whether IPV-related deaths varied by perpetration or victimization, which is an important direction for future research.

WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS DO?

The researchers reviewed data collected by the National Violent Death Reporting System, which is a U.S. surveillance system that collects data for homicides, suicides, legal intervention deaths, and undetermined/unintended firearms fatalities. Types of data reviewed included medical examiner/coroner findings and police reports. The researchers coded data for IPV-related deaths among 0–24-year-olds from 38 U.S. states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia during 2014–2018.



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WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS FIND?

Overall, the researchers identified 1927 IPV-related deaths, which represented 6.5% of all violent deaths with known circumstances among youth ages 0-24 years during 2014-2018. Among IPV-related deaths, 51.8% were homicides, 43.1% were suicides, 3.0% were suicides connected to a homicide, 1.0% were legal intervention deaths, and 1.2% were unintentional/undetermined deaths.

Additionally, age and sex were related to IPV death. Older youth were more likely to have an IPV-precipitated death than were younger youth. Most youth who died by IPV-related suicide were male (81%), highlighting the need to engage boys and young men in IPV intervention. In contrast, most youth who died by IPV-related homicide were female, which is consistent with previous research indicating that almost half of all female homicide victims are killed by intimate partners. Lastly, IPV-related death was also associated with firearm access and racial minority status.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS RESEARCH?

This research is among the first to provide a comprehensive picture of IPV-related deaths among young people. Findings from this research emphasize the importance of considering exposure to IPV as a risk factor for death and underscore the need for intervention and prevention efforts. Clinicians working with young people experiencing IPV should be aware of the increased risk of violent death within this population.

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KEYWORDS

Intimate partner violence, death, homicide, suicide, children, youth

FULL REFERENCE

Graham, L. M., Kafka, J. M., AbiNader, M. A., Lawler, S. M., Gover-Chamlou, A. N., Messing, J. T., & Moracco, K. E. (2022). Intimate partner violence–related fatalities among US youth aged 0–24 years, 2014–2018. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 62(4), 529-537.