

# A Meta-Analysis of Risk and Protective Factors for Dating Violence Victimization: The Role of Family and Peer Interpersonal Context

## WHAT IS THE RESEARCH ABOUT?

- Dating violence (DV) involves acts of sexual violence (unwanted sexual activities), physical violence (punching, hitting, slapping or kicking), or psychological violence (threatening, shaming, humiliating) to a current or previous dating partner.
- Sadly, DV can lead to severe mental health problems (i.e., depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, substance abuse) and/or poor education outcomes among youth who are victimized.
- Over the years, researchers have examined the various factors that can affect one's risk of experiencing DV.
- The purpose of this study was to summarize the existing research on how family factors (i.e., experiencing abuse; having parental support) and peer factors (i.e., experiencing peer victimization; having peer support) can increase or decrease the risk of experiencing DV.

## WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS DO?

- In this study, the researchers searched for articles that examined if family and/or peer factors impacted one's experience of DV. 87 articles that met the criteria for the study were identified.
- The authors then summarized the results from all the studies (conducted a 'meta-analysis'), which included a sample of 278,712 adolescents and college students who were in a dating relationship

## **WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?**

- This research can support the development of effective programs targeting DV among youth.
- Further, the researchers can provide practitioners and educators with a clearer picture of factors related to DV, and how schools, families, and communities can work to prevent the negative outcomes associated with DV.

## **WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS FIND?**

- The researchers found that family factors predicted risk for DV. Specifically, experiencing abuse, experiencing neglect, or witnessing violence increased one's risk for DV; but positive parental support and parental monitoring decreased risk for DV.
- The researchers found that peer factors predicted risk for DV. Specifically, experiencing peer victimization, peer sexual harassment, and associating with deviant peers was associated with increased risk for DV; but having peer support reduced risk for DV.
- Overall, this study found that both families and peers play an important role in one's experience of DV in romantic relationships among adolescents.

## **HOW CAN YOU USE THIS RESEARCH?**

- Researchers should consider both peer and family factors when considering risk for DV.
- Prevention programs should incorporate information on the supportive roles of both peers and parents.
- Since peer sexual harassment was associated with DV, prevention programs may need to address different forms of victimization simultaneously.

## **ABOUT THE RESEARCHERS**

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## **KEYWORDS**

Dating violence, meta-analysis, family, peers, risk factors, protective factors

## **FULL REFERENCE**

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