

Teens who perpetrate dating violence also likely to perpetrate violence involving siblings or peers

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Dating violence among adolescents is common and those who physically assault dating partners are also likely to have perpetrated violence involving siblings and peers, according to a report in the December issue of *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*.

"As many as one in ten U.S. high school students reports having been 'hit, slapped or physically hurt on purpose by their boyfriend or girlfriend' in the past year," the authors write as background information in the article. "Research on victims of [dating violence](#) has demonstrated that they are at risk for a range of negative consequences, including death, injury, suicidal thoughts, substance use, disordered eating and psychiatric disorders."

Emily F. Rothman, Sc.D., of Boston University School of Public Health, and colleagues surveyed 1,398 high school students at 22 public high schools in Boston from January through April of 2008. Students were asked to report how many times in the past 30 days they had perpetrated violence toward a person they were dating, other kids and/or peers and [siblings](#). Physical violence is defined as pushing, shoving, slapping, hitting, punching, kicking or choking a dating partner one or more times.

Overall, one-fifth (18.7 percent) of students reported having perpetrated physical dating violence in the past month. Specifically, 9.9 percent reported hitting, punching, kicking or choking their partner; 17.6 percent

pushed, shoved or slapped him or her; and 42.8 percent swore or cursed at their partner or called them fat, ugly, stupid or some other insult.

Of the 1,084 students with siblings, 256 boys (50.8 percent) and 351 girls (60.5 percent) reported that they had physically assaulted a sibling, peer or dating partner. Among boys, physical dating violence was the least commonly reported with only 14.1 percent, whereas 84.4 percent reported violence against peers and 49.6 reported violence toward siblings. The authors found a high incidence of overlap between dating violence and peer and sibling violence among boys, with 75 percent reporting both dating and peer violence and 55.6 reporting dating and sibling violence. A small percentage (2.3 percent) of boys reported only physical dating violence with no other form of violence.

Among the 351 girls who reported perpetrating one form of violence, 44.2 percent reported physical dating violence, 65.2 reported peer violence and 59.8 percent reported sibling violence. Of those involved in dating violence, 59.4 percent had also perpetrated peer violence and 50.3 percent had also perpetrated sibling violence. Additionally, 12 percent of girls reported only physical dating violence without the presence of peer or sibling violence.

"[Adolescents](#) who perpetrated physical dating violence were also likely to have perpetrated peer and/or sibling violence," the authors conclude. "Dating violence is likely one of many co-occurring adolescent problem behaviors including sibling and peer violence perpetration, substance use, weapon carrying and academic problems."

More information: *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med.*
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