

# One in six adolescents in the ER has experienced dating violence

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Of adolescents visiting the emergency department for any reason, one in five girls and one in eight boys reported dating violence in the past year. According to a study published online Monday in *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, dating violence among adolescents was also strongly associated with alcohol, illicit drug use and depression.

"An enormous number of youth and adolescents have already experienced [violence](#) in their dating lives," said lead study author Vijay Singh, MD, MPH, MS of the University of Michigan Injury Center and Department of Emergency Medicine in Ann Arbor, Mich. "Patterns that begin in adolescence can carry over to adulthood. Screening and intervention among youth with a history of dating violence can be critical to reducing future adult [intimate partner violence](#)."

Researchers screened 4,089 males and females age 14 to 20 who were seeking care in a suburban emergency department for dating violence within the past year. Nearly three-quarters (72.9 percent) were Caucasian, the majority (86.9 percent) were enrolled in school and just over one-quarter (25.8 percent) received public assistance. Of females, 18.4 percent reported past year dating violence, 10.6 percent reported dating victimization and 14.6 percent reported dating aggression. Of males, 12.5 percent reported past year dating violence, 11.7 percent reported dating victimization and 4.9 percent reported dating aggression.

Violent acts received by a young adult are called dating victimization; violent acts perpetrated by youth are called dating aggression.

Factors associated with dating violence for both males and females were African-American race, alcohol misuse, [illicit drug](#) misuse and depression. In addition, females reporting prior dating violence were also more likely to be on public assistance, to have grades of D or below and to have visited the [emergency department](#) in the prior year for an intentional injury.

"With this many youth and adolescents experiencing either dating victimization or dating aggression, it's dangerously easy for the behavior to become 'normalized,'" said Dr. Singh. "Simply treating the injury and not assessing for dating violence loses an opportunity for injury prevention and breaking the cycle of violence. Because African-American youth experienced greater odds of dating violence than their Caucasian peers, culturally tailored interventions will be essential."

**More information:** Dating Violence Among Male and Female Youth Seeking Emergency Department Care,  
[www.annemergmed.com/article/S0 ... \(14\)00486-7/fulltext](http://www.annemergmed.com/article/S0... (14)00486-7/fulltext)

Provided by American College of Emergency Physicians

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