

Dating violence among adolescents seen as health risk

December 2 2014, by Marc Ransford

More than one of every 10 Indiana adolescents experiences dating violence, and victims are more likely to carry a weapon to school, be injured in a fight, suffer depression, drink excessively or even attempt suicide, says a new report from Ball State University.

"Adolescent Dating Violence in Indiana" analyzed the prevalence of adolescent dating violence and associated risk factors from 2001 to 2011 by reviewing data from the 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System. The biannual national school-based survey conducted by state organizations and Centers for Disease Control assesses six types of [health risk behaviors](#) in youth.

"Less than 10 percent adolescents in the United States experienced dating violence in the past decade, while Indiana adolescents consistently reported about an 11 percent rate," said study co-author Cathy Whaley, manager of by Northeast Indiana Area Health Education Center (AHEC), which is located at Ball State. "We know that incidents of dating violence may impact educational outcomes and social life for adolescents."

The other coauthors are Jagdish Khubchandani, a community [health education](#) professor at Ball State, and Charlene Alexander, the university's associate provost for diversity.

The key findings of the report are:

- Adolescent victims in Indiana were two or more times likely to have symptoms of depression and binge drink, consider or attempt suicide, and have poorer grades in school.
- Victims were four or more times likely to carry a weapon at school or miss school, be injured in a fight, be raped or report a history of sexually transmitted disease.
- Rates differed based on race and ethnicity. Minority groups have higher prevalence of dating violence.
- Highest rates of victimization were observed in high school seniors (14.9 percent), Hispanic females (14.1 percent), white males (12.8 percent) and African-American females (11.4 percent).

"This is very serious, given that adolescence is the period where lifelong behaviors and attitudes are shaping up," Khubchandani said.

"Experiencing victimization and risk factors such as depression or binge drinking can impact life in adulthood."

Such violent behaviors in youth are preventable and require community-wide efforts. There are several evidence-based prevention programs that can be implemented by schools to educate youth and equip them with better life skills, he said.

"School personnel and parents should play a key role in preventing teen [dating violence](#) and educating children on healthy relationships," Khubchandani said. "Unfortunately, our previous studies have found that schools nationwide are not prepared to deal with the issue."

More information: The report is available online:
[Thcms.bsu.edu/-/media/WWW/Depart ... C/NEIAHEC/Adolescent
%20Dating%20Violence%20in%20Indiana.pdf](https://cms.bsu.edu/-/media/WWW/Depart...C/NEIAHEC/Adolescent%20Dating%20Violence%20in%20Indiana.pdf)

Provided by Ball State University

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