

New study finds significant differences in intimate partner violence injury patterns across age groups

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Intimate partner violence (IPV) disproportionately impacts women and younger populations, with incidences peaking between adolescence and young adulthood. Alarming, a strong correlation exists between IPV

experienced in adolescence and its persistence into adulthood.

Radiologists can play a key role in identifying physical signs of IPV, since specific fracture patterns detected in imaging have been shown to be predictive of abuse in children and adults. However, limited information is available about injury patterns in IPV-exposed adolescents and emerging adults despite their vulnerability.

In a recent study, researchers from Brigham and Women's Hospital, a founding member of the Mass General Brigham health care system, offer insights that will help health care providers detect IPV in these previously overlooked age groups.

The researchers conducted a retrospective data review of IPV patients in US Emergency Departments from 2005 to 2020, aiming to identify patterns related to IPV across three age groups: adolescents (25 years).

Their findings revealed that, while overall IPV severity increased with age, adolescents exhibited a significantly higher incidence of sexual assault than emerging adults and adults. The proportion of female patients was highest among adolescents and decreased with age.

Additionally, [adolescent](#) patients showed higher rates of lower trunk injuries, facial fractures, and fractures in the hands, fingers, and toes. Notably, they had a fourfold increased likelihood of cervical fractures compared to older age groups.

"While IPV is a critical issue across all age groups, the [developmental stage](#), [social dynamics](#), and systemic structures surrounding adolescents provide unique opportunities for effective intervention," said Bharti Khurana, MD, a radiologist and founder and director of the Trauma Imaging Research and Innovation Center at the Brigham and Women's Hospital.

"Efforts to address teen IPV can leverage these factors to promote lasting changes in behavior and relationships, potentially preventing the cycle of violence from continuing into adulthood."

The research is [published](#) in *Journal of Adolescent Health*.

More information: Rose McKeon Olson et al, Age-specific Patterns of Intimate Partner Violence Related Injuries in US Emergency Departments, *Journal of Adolescent Health* (2024). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2024.01.034](#) [www.jahonline.org/article/S105 ... \(24\)00070-3/abstract](http://www.jahonline.org/article/S105... (24)00070-3/abstract)

Provided by Brigham and Women's Hospital

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