

Study: Parents who experience intimate partner violence show higher potential for stress, child maltreatment

August 26 2024



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Parents who recently experienced intimate partner violence reported more parenting stress and higher potential for child maltreatment, and

were less likely to use positive parenting strategies, according to UTHHealth Houston research [published](#) Aug. 26, 2024, in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

"Our findings demonstrate the collateral damage of domestic violence—that the [negative consequences](#) are not limited to the couple and instead have the potential to affect how they parent, and ultimately the health of their children. We must expend every effort to prevent this public health problem," said Jeff Temple, Ph.D., first author of the study and professor in the Louis A. Faillace, MD, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at McGovern Medical School at UTHHealth Houston.

Researchers focused on physical and sexual partner violence. Beginning in 2010, over 1,000 [high school students](#) were given annual surveys. Now in its 15th year, the surveys include questions about [mental health](#), violence and parenting. Researchers also assessed child abuse potential, [parental stress](#), and positive parenting skills.

Temple said the results of the study emphasize the need to expand resources for people in violent relationships, encourage them with positive parenting strategies, and give them the tools to become better parents. Doing so, he said, can hopefully stop the intergenerational cycle of violence. The study's findings also suggest that increasing efforts to treat stress and anxiety of people experiencing [intimate partner violence](#) could help avoid potential maltreatment of their children and promote healthy development.

"If you look at some of the systematic and structural factors that relate to both violence and parenting, it's harder to be a good parent, and to avoid violence, if you are not making a livable wage, if you live in unsafe housing, if you live in a community that is experiencing a lot of violence, if you have to work three jobs," said Temple, the Betty and Rose

Pfefferbaum Chair in Child Mass Trauma and Resilience at McGovern Medical School. "So if we can reduce that stress, then maybe we can do things like reduce partner violence and prevent [child abuse](#) and promote positive parenting."

Temple says that just because someone is in a violent relationship, it does not mean they are automatically a bad parent; the study suggests ways to limit maltreatment of children.

"It's not a lost cause because we can give them the resources they need to get out of the violent relationship and to have positive parenting," he said.

Co-authors from the Faillace Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences include Elizabeth Baumler, Ph.D., and Leila Wood, Ph.D.

More information: Jeff R. Temple et al, Intimate Partner Violence and Parenting, *JAMA Pediatrics* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamapediatrics.2024.2705](#)

Provided by University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

Citation: Study: Parents who experience intimate partner violence show higher potential for stress, child maltreatment (2024, August 26) retrieved 26 August 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2024-08-parents-intimate-partner-violence-higher.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--