Adolescent Intimate Partner Violence: Deadly Outcomes and the Need for Effective Prevention Strategies

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Senior Fellow
Agenda

Background & history of intimate partner violence in the US

Research study #1: Intimate partner homicide of adolescents

Research study #2: State laws on access to protection orders

Future research: State laws on school-based prevention and response
How has adolescent intimate partner violence come up in your work or practice?
Intimate Partner Violence

- **Intimate partner violence (IPV):** includes physical, sexual or psychological/emotional harm by a current or former partner or spouse, can occur between heterosexual or same-sex couples, and occurs on a continuum of frequency and severity.

  - Health consequences of IPV can be severe and long-lasting.
  - Intimate partner homicide (IPH) is the most extreme form of IPV.
  - Adolescence is a critical time for experiencing IPV.
Terminology

- Wife beating
- Wife battering
- Spouse abuse
- Marital violence
- Family violence
- Couple aggression
- Domestic violence
- Intimate partner violence
- Partner abuse
- Dating violence
- Relationship abuse
A Brief History of IPV in the US

1864: North Carolina - State v. Jesse Black
“A husband is responsible for the acts of his wife and he is required to govern his household...the law permits him to use towards his wife such a degree of force as is necessary to control an unruly temper and make her behave herself...and unless some permanent injury be inflicted...the law will not invade the domestic forum”

1871: Alabama - Fulgham v. State [Landmark case! First law against IPV]
“A rod which may be drawn through the wedding ring is not now deemed necessary to teach the wife her duty and subjection to the husband. The husband is therefore not justified or allowed by law to use such a weapon, or any other, for her moderate correction”

1910: US Supreme Court - Thompson v. Thompson
Wife had no cause for action on an assault/battery charge against her husband because it "would open the doors of the courts to accusations of all sorts of one spouse against the other"
A Brief History of IPV in the US (cont’d)

1950s: New York Daily Mirror

“You bet. It teaches them who’s boss. A lot of women tend to forget this is a man’s world.”

“Yes. Most of them have it coming anyway. If they don’t, it will remind them how well off they are. I subscribe to the theory that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.”

1960s-1980s:
Feminist movement leads to IPV awareness
A Brief History of IPV in the US (cont’d)

1972
Women’s advocates establish the first shelters for battered women and their children

1979
Congress holds hearings on the issue of domestic violence for the first time
Carter Administration creates the Office on Domestic Violence as part of the U.S. Department of Health

1984
Family Violence Prevention and Services Act is authorized, creating funding dedicated to domestic violence shelters and programs
A Brief History of IPV in the US (cont’d)

1985 & 1988:
US Surgeon General Koop issues a report calling for public education and the education of health professionals about the causes and consequences of various forms of domestic violence

Koop declares domestic violence as the leading health hazard to women in the US

1990
Healthy People 2000 objectives for public health specifically address the reduction of violence against women, including reducing the rate of physical assault by current or former intimate partners
A Brief History of IPV in the US (cont’d)

1993
North Carolina is the last state to outlaw marital rape

1994
Violence Against Women Act created by President Bill Clinton to alleviate battery and abuse of women
CDC and NIJ partner to administer the National Violence Against Women Survey

1996
American Medical Association launches Campaign Against Family Violence to raise physician awareness and begins to develop and publish professional guidelines for physicians’ response to IPV

2011
Institute of Medicine recommends screening for IPV among all women
Adolescent vs. Adult Intimate Partner Violence

- Different power dynamics because adolescents do not often have children involved or similar financial dependence

- Adolescents have less experience with romantic and dating relationships – less able to negotiate conflict and communicate in healthy ways

- Adolescents are more susceptible to influence of peers

- Adolescent IPV is a risk factor for adult IPV
Adolescent IPV Victimization

**Physical Violence**  (in the past year)

- **Total**: 8%
- **Female**: 9%
- **Male**: 7%

**Sexual Violence**  (in the past year)

- **Total**: 7%
- **Female**: 11%
- **Male**: 3%

*Source: Youth Risk Behavior Survey (2017)*
Adolescent IPV Victimization

% of Adolescents 12-18 in Relationships

- Any IPV: 69%
- Physical: 18%
- Sexual: 18%
- Psychological/emotional: 66%

Source: National Survey on Teen Relationships and Intimate Violence
Research Study #1: Adolescent Intimate Partner Homicide

1. What proportion of adolescent homicides is perpetrated by intimate partners?

2. What are the victim, perpetrator, and incident characteristics of adolescent intimate partner homicides?
Data Source

National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS)

- NVDRS is an active surveillance system in the US that provides data on violent deaths drawing information from death certificates, coroner/medical examiner reports, and law enforcement reports.

- Data includes information on victim and perpetrator demographics, relationship between victim and perpetrator, weapon type, location.

- Qualitative narratives which summarize the findings from the coroner/medical examiner reports and law enforcement records.
Study Sample

- Deaths coded as homicides for victims ages 11-18 years for 2003-2016 from 32 states (in blue on map) that contributed data for 1+ years

- Identified as *intimate partner* homicide if victim-perpetrator relationship was coded as spouse, ex-spouse, girlfriend or boyfriend, ex-girlfriend or ex-boyfriend, or girlfriend or boyfriend (unspecified current or former)

- 2,188 homicides of adolescents identified
Adolescent Intimate Partner Homicide Victims

7% (n = 150) of adolescent homicides were perpetrated by intimate partners

Adhia et al., *JAMA Pediatrics* 2019
Characteristics of Adolescent Intimate Partner Homicide

- Female victim: 90%
- Male perpetrator: 90%
- Current partner: 63%
- Firearm: 61%
- Victim's home: 38%
- Homicide-suicide: 16%

Average age (years):
- Victim: 16.8
- Perpetrator: 20.6
- Age difference: 3.9

Adhia et al., JAMA Pediatrics 2019
Adolescent Intimate Partner Homicide: Circumstances

- Broken/desired relationship or jealousy: 27%
- Altercation: 25%
- Reckless firearm behavior: 8%
- Pregnancy related: 7%
- Other: 5%
- Unknown: 29%

Adhia et al., *JAMA Pediatrics* 2019
Broken/desired relationship or jealousy: Victim had been having a relationship with another man from work that the perpetrator found out about and then invited her into a motel to talk about her relationship with the other man. He then stabbed her multiple times and fled.

Adhia et al., *JAMA Pediatrics* 2019
Adolescent Intimate Partner Homicide: Circumstances

**Altercation:**
Victim was shot and killed by her boyfriend after an argument over a title for a vehicle. There was a long history of abuse that preceded the homicide.

Adhia et al., *JAMA Pediatrics* 2019
Reckless firearm behavior:
Victim was at home with her boyfriend, who was playing with a shotgun he claimed to believe was not loaded. Gun discharged and shot the victim in the face.
**Pregnancy related:**
Victim was pregnant with her boyfriend’s baby. He did not want her to have the child and threatened to kill the baby. He punched her in the stomach, chest, and head and struck her with a baseball bat.
People Care!

In Her Words
The New York Times

Teen Girls and Dating Violence: Why We Should Be Paying Attention

could you please answer me

12:35 PM

6 UNREAD MESSAGES

You up? 11:32 PM

i miss u 11:45 PM

y aren’t u replying 2 me? 11:49 PM

i know yr getting these, u always have yr phone on u 1:05 AM

HELLOOOO?????????????????????? 1:13 AM

who are u with rn?

Teen Dating Violence Homicide — And Girls Are Common Victims

April 15, 2019 - 11:45 AM ET
RHTU CHATTERJEE

We cannot ignore the pressing issue of teen dating violence. Back in 2009, my office partnered with domestic violence organizations to provide resources to help teens escape abusive relationships. More must be done today to keep them safe.

Nearly half of women killed by homicide in the U.S. are killed by their former or current intimate partners. npr/2V3Ckzl

Teen Dating Abuse Is A Public Health Crisis. Here's How To Change That.

A new study fo

90 PERCENT OF TEENS KILLED BY THEIR PARTNERS ARE GIRLS—AND MOST OF THEM ARE MEN
### Evidence-Based Strategies for Preventing IPV

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teach safe and healthy relationship skills</td>
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<td>Engage influential adults and peers</td>
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<td>Disrupt the developmental pathways toward IPV</td>
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<td>Create protective environments</td>
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<td>Strengthen economic supports for families</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support survivors to increase safety and lessen harms</td>
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</table>

**Source:** CDC’s Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Across the Lifespan: A Technical Package of Programs, Policies, and Practices
Available Legal Protections

Civil Protection Orders

- Civil legal protection is seen as one important intervention for IPV victims
- Civil protection orders (CPOs) are court-ordered to protect an individual from another whose behavior is abusive, threatening, or exploitative

Use & Effectiveness

- ~20% of adult women in the US experiencing IPV annually obtain CPOs
- CPOs shown to be effective for adults in lowering risk of subsequent violence
- CPOs can increase feelings of well-being & safety for victims
Research Study #2: State Laws on Access to Protection Orders

Assess the current landscape of state legislation on specific provisions of CPOs with respect to adolescent access to protection from IPV

- Systematic assessment of statutes across all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (n = 51)

- Using data from the legal database Westlaw and public documents made available by state and local court systems to assist victims
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provision</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualifying definitions of abuse</td>
<td>• How expansive is the law in its definition of abuse? Does it include stalking, sexual assault, or the use of technology?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minors can be granted CPOs</td>
<td>• Does the law provide a mechanism or explicit procedure to allow minors to file for CPOs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating relationships</td>
<td>• Does the law allow individuals to seek CPOs who were or are in “dating relationships”?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minors can file on their own behalf</td>
<td>• Can minors file for a CPO without parental/guardian consent, or is adult or parental/guardian consent required?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPO prohibits firearm possession &amp; requires surrendering firearms</td>
<td>• Are persons subject to a CPO required to surrender firearms and/or are law enforcement granted authority to physically remove firearms from respondent?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Qualifying Definitions of Abuse

% of States with Statute

- Physical: 100%
- Sexual: 90%
- Threats: 92%
- Stalking: 86%
- Psychological/Emotional: 55%
- Technology: 24%
## Qualifying Definitions of Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nebraska: Device-based Harassment</th>
<th>Connecticut: Provides broad latitude to victims and courts</th>
<th>Alabama: Lists discrete crimes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Attempting to cause bodily injury</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Placing, by means of <strong>credible threat</strong>, another person in fear of bodily injury</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Credible threat includes verbal or written threat, including threat performed by use of an <strong>electronic communication device</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Been subjected to &quot;a continuous threat of present physical pain or physical injury, stalking or a <strong>pattern of threatening</strong>&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Child abuse, sexual abuse, assault, attempt, coercion, harassment, kidnapping, menacing, reckless endangerment, stalking, theft, trespass, and unlawful imprisonment</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Percent of States with Specific Provisions

- Minors granted CPO: 94%
- Dating relationships eligible: 86%
- Minors can file on own behalf: 27%
- CPO prohibits possession & requires firearm surrender: 43%
### Washington State Provisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Status</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minors can be granted CPOs</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dating relationships eligible</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor can file on their own behalf</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(at 16 years)</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPO prohibits firearm possession; requires surrendering firearms</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifying Definitions of Abuse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Physical</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sexual</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Threats of Physical or Sexual</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Psychological/Emotional</td>
<td>✗</td>
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<td>• Stalking</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Technology</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendations

- Allow minors to be granted CPOs
- Recognize dating relationships
- Allow minors to file on their own behalf
- Prohibit possession and require surrender of firearms
- Include psychological/emotional violence and the abusive use of technology

Knowledge gaps:
- How often minors file for CPOs
- Effectiveness of CPOs for minors
- Which elements of state laws are most effective
Conclusions

- Advocacy to improve state laws to increase accessibility of CPOs for adolescents is needed

- Education/dissemination of the availability, appropriateness and legal protections afforded by CPOs should to be communicated to adolescents

- CPO is just one potential option for protection for adolescents experiencing IPV

- Need to continue to identify and implement interventions for the primary prevention of IPV
Evidence-Based Strategies for Preventing IPV

- Teach safe and healthy relationship skills
- Engage influential adults and peers
- Disrupt the developmental pathways toward IPV
- Create protective environments
- Strengthen economic supports for families
- Support survivors to increase safety and lessen harms

Source: CDC’s Preventing Intimate Partner Violence Across the Lifespan: A Technical Package of Programs, Policies, and Practices
Role of Schools

• Schools are a potentially influential context to prevent IPV

• Need to start early

• Create environment that enhances feelings of safety, promotes healthy relationships and respectful boundaries, reduces tolerance for violence

• Increase support from school personnel

• Modify physical spaces to improve safety and raise awareness
School-Based Programs for IPV Prevention

Social-emotional learning programs

Men and boys as allies

Bystander empowerment and education

Improve school climate and safety

Coaching Boys INTO MEN

SHIFTING BOUNDARIES
Discussion

- What information about IPV or other forms of violence did you receive in high school? What would you have wanted to know?

- What attributes would be important to include in programs for preventing and responding to IPV in schools?

- Which stakeholders are important for designing and delivering these programs?
State IPV Laws for School-Based Prevention & Response

Schools play a role in both prevention and response to harm

These laws have the potential to *alter the social context in which IPV occurs* by encouraging or requiring school districts to adopt prevention education curricula and policies for addressing IPV

- Designate administrator(s) to oversee IPV efforts
- Provide prevention education to students
- Establish consequences for IPV
- Establish reporting procedures
- Communicate policy to students, parents, staff
- Provide resources/counseling to victims & perpetrators
- Train teachers, staff, students, and parents to intervene and report incidents
State IPV Laws for School-Based Prevention & Response

Source: National Association of State Boards of Education
Future Research Plans

• Estimate the effectiveness of state IPV laws on reducing the prevalence of adolescent IPV

• Assess the implementation of IPV laws in school districts by examining written policies and conducting interviews with school administrators, staff, and students

• Develop a toolkit for implementation of IPV legislation in high schools

• Thoughts on pressing research needs from the field?
Thank you!

Acknowledgements: Mary Kernic, Jaron Goddard, Fred Rivara, David Hemenway, Mary Fan, Monica Vavilala

Funding: Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development T32 Fellowship

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