

**Dating Violence and Psychosocial Risk Correlates Among District of Columbia Adolescents: The Syndemic Relationship**

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### BACKGROUND
- Violence between partners often begins in adolescents when individuals begin dating — making adolescents an appropriate focus for primary prevention. (Avery-Koed, et al., 1997)
- Physical dating violence (DV) and sexual violence (SV) victimization among adolescents can result in negative physical and mental health consequences. (Colber et al., 2002)
- Prior national research has demonstrated an association between psychosocial risk correlates and DV/SV victimization. (Silverman, et al., 2006; Swahn, et al., 2009; You, et al., 2010; Howard, et al., 2007; Howard, et al., 2008)
- But, studies have not examined the extent of these associations among D.C. adolescents.
- D.C. has a higher prevalence of DV (17%) compared to the national average (10%); slightly higher prevalence of SV (9% vs. 8%) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC] Youth Risk Behavior Survey [YRBS], 2007)

### OBJECTIVES
- Identify psychosocial risk correlates associated with DV and SV among adolescents in D.C.
- Assess the risk correlates for adolescents in this region to facilitate the development of primary prevention interventions to reduce the health consequences of DV/SV

### METHODS
- Ninth through twelfth grade adolescents in D.C. who completed the 2003, 2005, or 2007 CDC YRBS (n=5,474)
- Bivariate and multivariate logistic regression was used to assess DV/SV victimization with risk correlates (i.e., other violence, psychological well-being, substance use, and sexual risk behaviors)
- Dummy variables for 2005 and 2007 were included to control for time (ref=2003)

### FINDINGS
- In 2007, 16.1% of females and 18.0% of males reported DV victimization.
- No significant differences across years
- No differences by race (non-black/black) across the years, except in 2005 for SV

### CONCLUSIONS
- Findings suggest a strong correlation between DV/SV and psychosocial risk correlates among D.C. adolescents.
- Findings are congruent with prior national research and highlight the local need for prevention and services to reduce the health burden of DV/SV among D.C. adolescents.
- Given differences of SV by gender, future studies should examine gender-specific aspects of such violence.
- Interventions to reduce other forms of violence (e.g., community violence), emotional well being, and sexual risk behaviors could alleviate DV/SV and its effects.
- Future research should employ a longitudinal design to assess temporal order and causality.
- Will help identify the broader context of both victimization and perpetration

### REFERENCES


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- Elizabeth Reed, ereedpch@gwu.edu

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**TABLE 1:** Prevalence of Physical Dating Violence Victimization (Past 12 Months) and Sexual Violence Victimization (Lifetime) among D.C. Adolescents

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