The Effects of Trauma Exposure on Teen Dating Violence Involvement and Relationship Satisfaction

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Abstract

- This study determines the relationship between involvement of teen dating violence and (a) violence experienced in the home, (b) violence experienced in the community, (c) perceived quality of the romantic relationship, and (d) having "deviant peers". Exposure to community violence was positively correlated with teen dating violence perpetration and victimization.
- Reported quality of relationship was positively correlated with maternal warmth and negatively correlated with exposure to community violence.
- This study also determined the relationship between involvement of teen dating violence and (b) violence experienced in the community, (c) perceived quality of the romantic relationship, and (d) having "deviant peers".
- Exposure to community violence was positively correlated with teen dating violence perpetration and victimization. This study determined the relationship between involvement of teen dating violence and (b) violence experienced in the community, (c) perceived quality of the romantic relationship, and (d) having "deviant peers".
- This study also determined the relationship between involvement of teen dating violence and (b) violence experienced in the community, (c) perceived quality of the romantic relationship, and (d) having "deviant peers". Exposure to community violence was positively correlated with teen dating violence perpetration and victimization.

Purpose and Hypothesis

- Intimate Partner Violence/ Domestic violence (Dependent variable)
  - IPV/DV was measured using the Domestic Violence Inventory and includes the use of Marker for Perpetration and Marker for Victimization.
- Relationship Satisfaction/Quality of Romantic Relationship (Dependent Variable)
  - Relationship satisfaction was measured by the Quality of Romantic Relationship Inventory.
- Exposure to Community Violence (Independent variable)
  - Exposure to Community Violence is based on the Exposure to Community Violence Inventory.
- Exposure to Home Violence (Parental Warmth/Hostility; Independent variable)
  - Exposure to Home Violence used the Quality of Parental Relationships Inventory to measure parental warmth and hostility.

Methods

Research Design and Data Collection

- The current study is a secondary analysis of the data obtained from the Pathways to Desistance study, a longitudinal, multi-site study.
- The original study was made up of serious juvenile offenders, ages 14-18, and followed them over a 7-year period after their involvement in court for felony level offenses.
- The current study uses data collected from self-report questionnaires, at the 48-month follow up (n=1,354).

Measures

- Intimate Partner Violence/ Domestic violence (Dependent variable)
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Results

Spearman’s Correlation

- Maternal warmth and the quality of romantic relationships showed a statistically significant, positive but weak correlation (r=.244, p<.000).
- Exposure to violence within the community and the quality of romantic relationships yielded a statistically significant, weak, negative correlation (r=-.083, p=.022).

Table 3. Correlation of Parental Warmth and Hostility, Exposure to Community Violence, and Relationship Quality

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Mann-Whitney U Tests

- Those who reported no involvement in domestic violence perpetration (Mean rank=418:81) had lower scores of exposure to violence than those who reported involvement in DV perpetration (Mean rank=501.26, U=123936.500, p<.001).
- Participants who reported no involvement in domestic violence victimization (Mean rank=418.68) had lower scores of exposure to violence than those who reported involvement in DV victimization (Mean rank=4.9958, U=123655.500, p<.001).

Discussion

- Results did not indicate a relationship between exposure to violence in the home (parental warmth or hostility) and involvement in DV relationships as predicted. There is the possibility that parental warmth and hostility did not play as significant a role in DV involvement for the participants as expected. This should be further researched.
- Exposure to community violence had the only significant relationship between teen DV perpetration and victimization. This could be attributed to teen’s having “deviant peers” and the normalization of violence within the community they live in. The more exposure to violent events may make a teen less sensitive to perpetrating or being the victim of violent acts.
- Exposure to community violence indicated a negative relationship with reported quality of relationship and satisfaction. This may be attributed to increased experiences of violence leading to possible dissatisfaction with self and personal relationships.
- Maternal warmth also indicated a weak positive correlation with reported quality of relationship and satisfaction. This result was unexpected, but does pose the question of paternal, gender-related roles and their effects on children’s dating attitudes. There is some evidence that suggests maternal IPV perpetration can increase child’s risk for future involvement in IPV relationship. This needs further research.

Limitations

- One of the studies prominent limitations is the sample size and its generalizability. This study used a sample of convicted juvenile offenders, with a majority of the sample being males. Teens involved in juvenile court are more likely to have history of violence and trauma compared to the general population. There is evidence to support that gender differences may play a role in both experience and reporting of domestic violence within romantic relationships.
- The variable measures and definitions of violence within the home could also be refined to include more specific experiences violent experiences within the home. The original study does not directly measure child maltreatment, nor does it consider the presence of violence between parental figures.

Recommendations

- More research needs to be done to study different traumas and their effects on teen behaviors and involvement in violence. While there is understanding of how a child experiencing or witnessing violence within the home can increase the likelihood of behavioral and mental health issues, there are other types of traumas that can affect a child’s development.
- Community violence such as gun violence, assaults, gang activity, police presence and brutality, school lockdowns, etc., should be explored to understand their influence on a child’s development and attitude towards others and the world around them.

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