

The Effect of Inter-Partner Violence on Substance Use Among Adolescents and Young Adults

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Abstract

Inter-partner violence (IPV) is prevalent in the United States and the impact of IPV has been found to be detrimental. Although previous research has indicated that self-medication is a common behavior among adult victims of IPV, little research has focused on perpetrators of IPV or IPV among adolescents. The present study aimed to examine alcohol and marijuana use among adolescents and young adults who have experienced IPV. The study surveyed 1,448 adolescents and young adults who visited an emergency department due to violent injuries in Flint, Michigan. The present study found that participants who self-identified as perpetrators-only or perpetrators/victims engaged in alcohol use significantly more than victims or participants who had not experienced IPV. Furthermore, it was found that the age of onset for alcohol use was significantly lower for perpetrators/victims of IPV compared to participants who had not experienced IPV. Additionally, marijuana use was significantly higher among perpetrators/victims when compared to victims-only, perpetrators-only, or participants who had not experienced IPV. The findings of the present study shed light on the needed: 1) future research examining the connection between IPV and substance use and 2) changes for IPV treatment plans.

Introduction

Significance of Study

- Adolescents and young adults who experience IPV are at an especially high risk for poor health and social outcomes, including substance use (Stoddard, et al., 2013), as well as poor school outcomes (Zaha et al. 2013).
- Adolescence who engaged in regular alcohol use at a young age have a higher probability of negative consequences later in life (Kraus, Bloomfield, Augustin, and Reese, 2000).
- In 1999, \$510.8 billion was directed toward substance abuse costs (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008).

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between perpetrators and victims of IPV with use of alcohol and marijuana.

Research Questions

- Do victims and/or perpetrators of IPV engage in more alcohol use compared to those who have not experienced IPV?
- Do victims and/or perpetrators of IPV engage in more marijuana use compared to those who have not experienced IPV?

Hypotheses

- Victims and/or perpetrators of IPV are more likely to engage in alcohol use compared individuals who have not experienced IPV.
- Victims and/or perpetrators of IPV are more likely to engage in marijuana use compared to individuals who have not experienced IPV.

Literature Review

Prevalence of IPV

Worldwide, about 30% of women have experienced victimization in the form of IPV, and about 38% of the murders of women are by their intimate partners (WHO, 2017).

Prevalence of IPV Among Adolescents

Nationally, 25%-50% of adolescents will experience IPV in the form of physical violence (Zaha et al., 2013).

Prevalence of IPV and Substance Use

Among couples who enter treatment for substance use, IPV is high, ranging from 54%-66% (Klostermann, Kelley, Mignone, Pusateri, & Fals-Stewart, 2010).

Research Gaps

- The focus is largely on females as the victims and males as the perpetrators.
- While many studies report that it is unknown which is more likely to be a precursor to the other (substances or IPV), the majority of the research focuses on substances as the precursor to IPV and not the other way around.
- The majority of research which focuses on IPV and substance use only includes adult participants: little research has been conducted with adolescent participants.

Methodology

Research Design and Data Collection

- The current study is a secondary analysis of data from *Substance Use Among Violently Injured Youth in an Urban Emergency Department: Services and Outcomes in Flint, Michigan, 2009-2013*.
- The original study examined adolescents and young adults who visited an Emergency Department for violent injuries in Flint, Michigan.

Sample and Sampling Method

- A non-probability convenience sample of youth (age 14-25) was used.
- A total of 1,448 participants (N= 1,448) were included.

Measures

Inter-Partner Violence

- IPV was measured by asking participants 13 questions related to violent acts during fights, conflicts, arguments, or physical attacks with their romantic partner.
- Participants were divided into four categories based on their response: Non-victim/non-perpetrator (no history of violent acts), perpetrator-only (committed one or more acts of violence against their partner), victim-only (recipient of one or more acts of violence from their partner), and victim/perpetrator (committed one or more acts of violence against their partner and recipient of one or more acts of violence from their partner)

Alcohol-Use

- Alcohol-use was measured in two ways: Alcohol consumption and age of onset
- Alcohol consumption was measured by asking, "In the past 6 months, have you had a drink of beer, wine, or liquor more than two or three times? Five or more drinks?"
- Age of onset was measured by asking, "About how old were you when you first started drinking, not counting small tastes or sips of alcohol?"

Marijuana-Use

- Marijuana-use was measured by asking, "In the past 6 months, how often have you used Marijuana?"

Results

Alcohol-Use

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

- Victims/perpetrators began drinking at a significantly younger age compared to participants who identified as non-victims and non-perpetrators (See Table 1 and Figure 1).
- Victims-only and perpetrators-only were not significantly different from other IPV groups.

Table 1. Results of One-Way ANOVA Testing the Relationship Between IPV Groups and Age of Onset

	Non-Victim and Non-Perpetrator		Victim Only		Perpetrator Only		Victim and Perpetrator		ANOVA		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F	df	p
Age of Onset	16.31	2.85	15.93	2.70	15.81	2.40	15.61	2.78	4.069	(3,923)	0.007

Chi-Square Test of Independence

- Victims/perpetrators were significantly more likely to engage in alcohol-use compared to non-victims/non-perpetrators and victims-only (See Table 2 and Figure 2).
- No significant association was found between IPV categories and frequency of alcohol engagement.

Table 2. Engagement in Alcohol Use Among IPV Groups

	Non-Victim and Non-Perpetrator		Victim-Only		Perpetrator-Only		Victim and Perpetrator	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Alcohol Use								
No	254	38.9%	66	36.3%	12	27.3%	108	22.1%
Yes	399	61.1%	116	63.7%	32	72.7%	380	77.9%

Mean Age of Onset of Alcohol Use

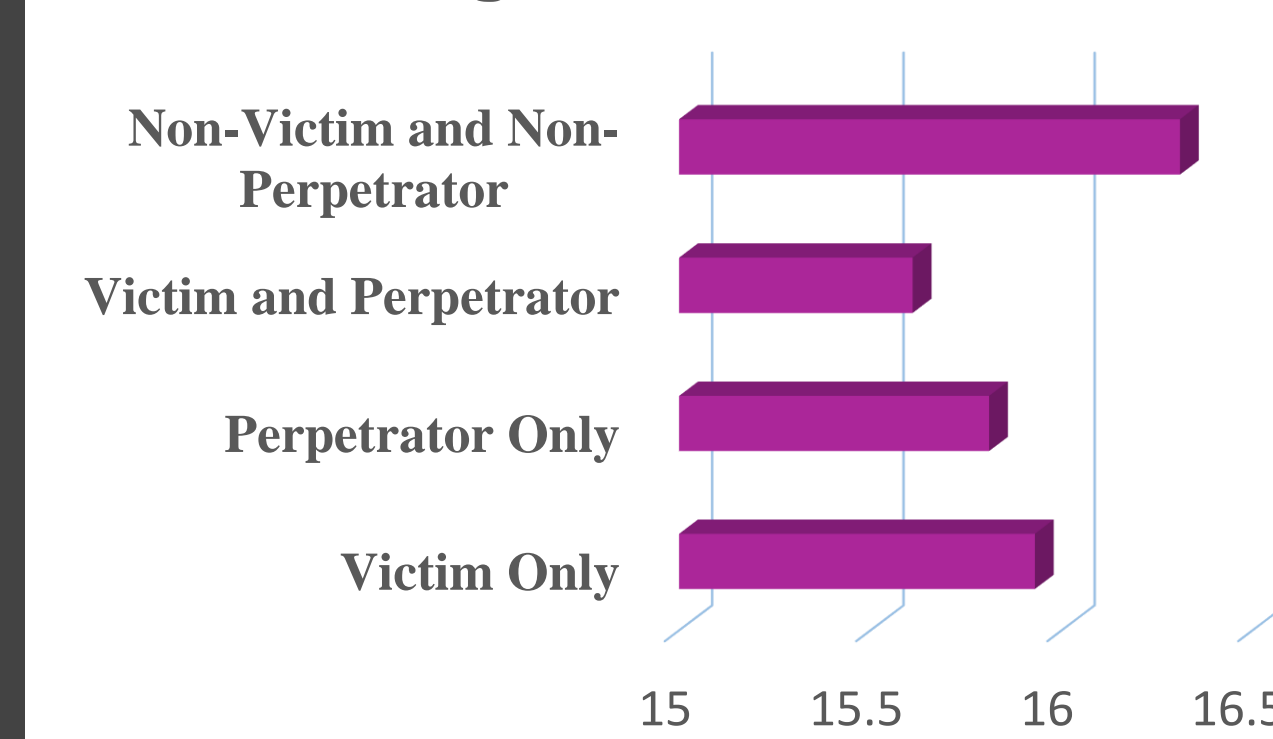


Figure 1. Mean age of onset of alcohol use among IPV groups.

Engagement in Alcohol Use

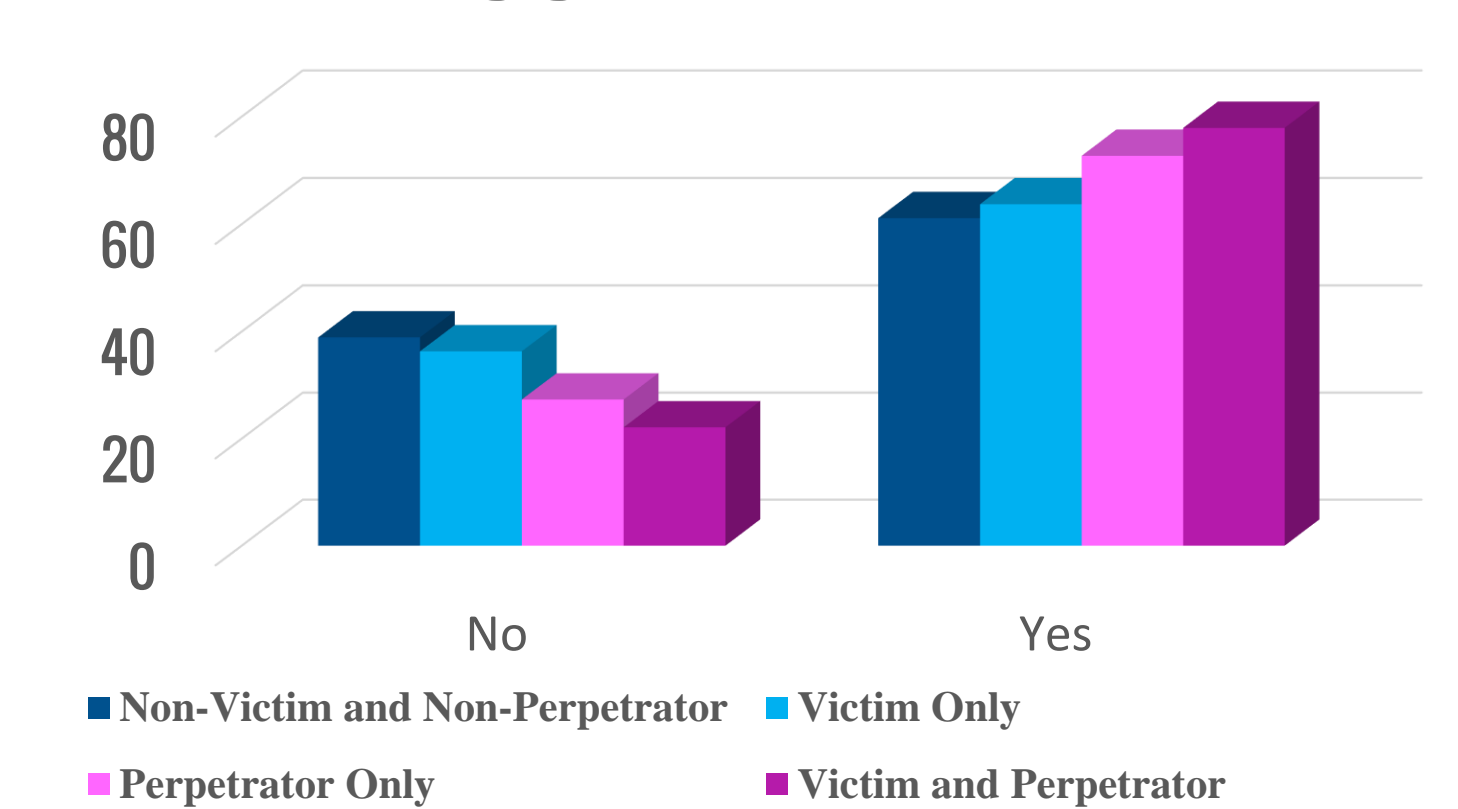


Figure 2. Engagement of alcohol use among IPV groups.

Marijuana-Use

Chi-Square Test of Independence

- Victims/perpetrators were significantly more likely to engage in marijuana use daily or almost daily compared to non-victims/non-perpetrator, victims-only, and perpetrators-only (See Figure 3).

Frequency of Marijuana Use in the Past 6 Months

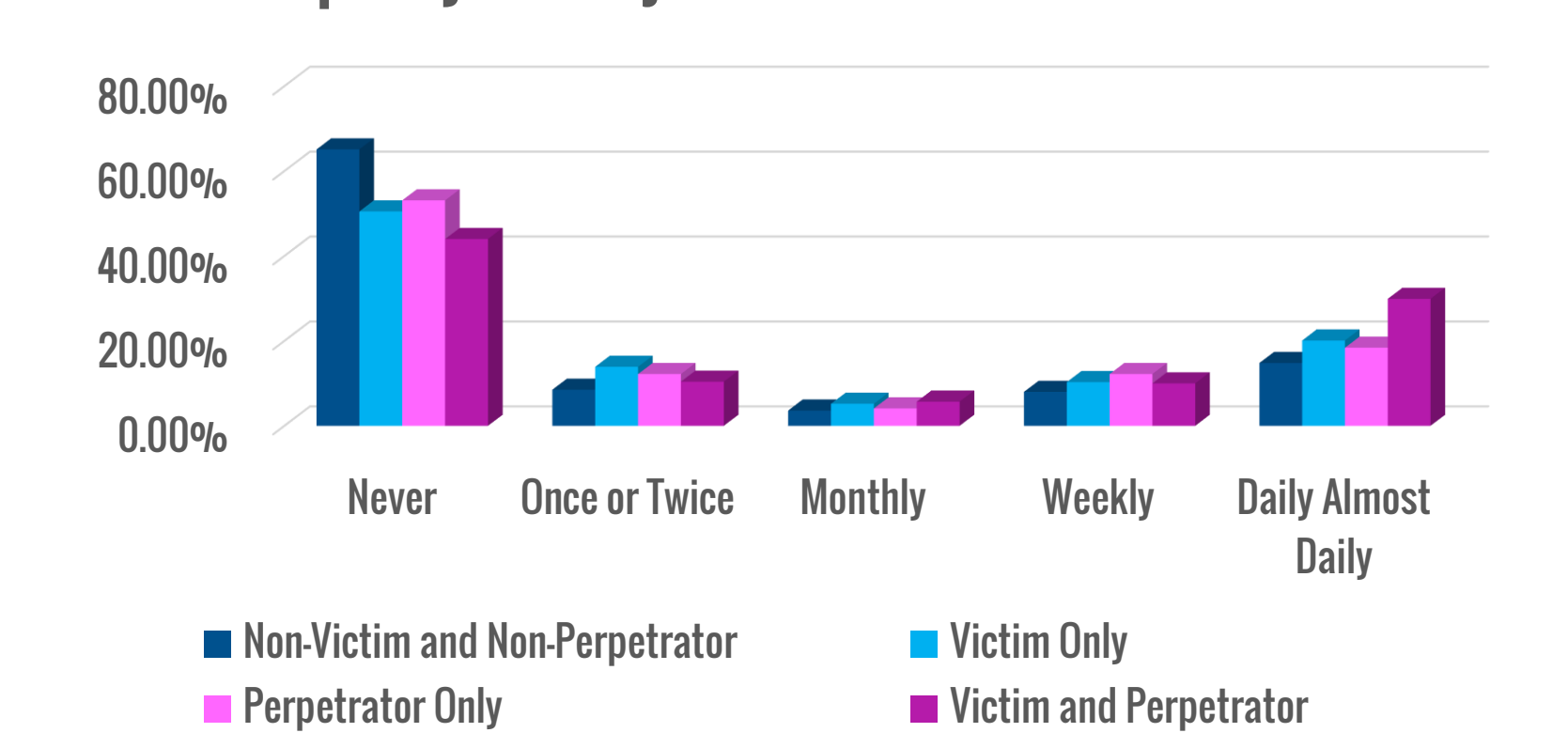


Figure 3. Engagement in marijuana use among IPV groups.

Conclusions

Summary of Findings

- Hypothesis 1 was supported: Perpetrators/victims and perpetrators-only were found to engage in alcohol use significantly more than victims-only and those who did not experience IPV. Perpetrator/victims were also found to have a significantly younger age of onset of alcohol use compared to participants who had not experienced IPV.
- Hypothesis 2 was supported: Perpetrators/victims were significantly more likely to engage in marijuana use compared to victims-only, perpetrators-only, and non-victims/non-perpetrators.

Implications in Social Work

- Understanding the tendencies of individuals who experience IPV, can allow social workers to be competent when working with individuals who have experienced IPV.
- Treatment plans for individuals who experience IPV should incorporate psychoeducation and prevention for alcohol use and marijuana use.
- The prevention of substance use among adolescence and young adults can not only benefit the individuals directly being treated, but also society as a whole.
- Future research should continue to examine not only victims-only and perpetrators-only of IPV, but also individuals who identify as both victims and perpetrators.

Limitations

- Secondary data was used.
- Participants were from Flint, Michigan only.
- Majority of participants identified as Black or African American.
- Only two substances (alcohol and marijuana) were examined as it relates to IPV.

Strengths

- Sample size was robust.
- All participants included an extensive screening assessment prior to participating in the study.
- The research topic is a major strength due to the implications that the results can have in real-world interactions between social workers and their clients.

References (Selected)

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