

Dating Violence Among Adolescents: A Review of Empirical Studies

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국문초록

연구배경: 데이트 폭력은 청소년을 포함한 젊은 인구집단의 신체적, 정신적 건강을 위협하는 중요한 공중보건 문제이다. 친밀한 남녀관계에서 시작되는 데이트 폭력의 위협에 노출되는 시기가 바로 청소년들이 생애주기 상 가장 급격히 발달하면서 많은 변화를 겪는 시기라는 것이 더 민감한 관심을 끈다. 그러나 이 문제 또는 이 문제를 해결하기 위한 노력들의 정도와 심각성을 이해하기 위한 구조적인 노력은 그다지 많이 이루어지지 않았다.

연구목적: 본 연구의 목적은 미국 청소년과 성인 초기 연령집단의 데이트 폭력 예방, 측정 도구, 위험 요인, 이환정도에 대해 지금까지의 관련 연구자료 고찰하여 일반적인 경향을 소개하는데 있다.

연구방법: 1990년부터 2007년까지 발표된 청소년과 성인 초기 인구의 데이트 폭력에 관한 60개의 논문을 검색하여 고찰하였다. 사회과학과 보건과학 관련 연구논문의 검색모듈을 활용하였는데 PsycInfo, Pubmed, 그리고 CINAHL였다.

연구결과: 데이트 폭력의 위험요인은 크게 개인적 요인, 심인적 요인, 가족 요인, 학교 및 친구 집단 요인으로 나뉘어진다. 개인적 요인으로는 자아존중감, 성, 인종, 약물사용, 성상대자 수, 과거 폭력경험이 유의미한 것으로 나타났다. 이 밖의 다른 개인적 요인, 즉 심인적 요인으로는 자기효능감, 식습관, 반사회적 행동 등이 있었다. 가족 요인으로는 가족 구조, 부모 성향이 유의미한 특성들이었으며 이 밖에 학교, 친구, 지역사회 환경적 요인이 관련 있는 것으로 보고되었다.

Key words: Dating violence, Adolescents, Risk factors, Prevention education, Literature review

I. Introduction

Previous studies indicate that dating violence(DV) is an important public health issue, threatening the physical and mental health of adolescent population. In a national study of American adolescents, 29% of girls reported psychological violence in their romantic relationships, and 31% reported ever being involved in any type of violence(Halpern et al. 2001). Rennison & Rand 2002). Lewis and Fremouw (2001) report that one in three college couples on the average will be subjected to at least one incident of violence during their relationship. Smith, White, and Holland(2003) found that nearly one in two college women had experienced physical or sexual violence in their dating relationships.

The impact of being a victim of dating violence, a category of domestic violence, includes depression, suicide attempts, chronic pain syndromes, psychosomatic disorders, physical injury, and a variety of reproductive health consequences (Krug et al., 2002). In addition to the huge personal impact on the lives of women who are assaulted, dating violence also has enormous financial implications. The National Center for Injury Prevention and Control(2003) indicates that “the costs of intimate partner rape, physical assault, and stalking exceed \$5.8 billion each year, nearly \$4.1 billion of which is for direct medical and mental health care services” (p. 2).

Although adolescents are in a crucial developmental period when the risk of dating violence can emerge through the

initiation of intimate partner relationships (Magdol et al. 1998), few research studies have been systematically conducted to understand the magnitude and severity of the problem, as well as prevention efforts(Hickmen et al., 2004). Therefore, the purpose of this review is to identify the available research on the prevalence, risk factors, assessment tools, and prevention of dating violence among adolescents.

II. Review methods

The definition of violence in this review refers to “the perpetration of physical, emotional, or threat abuse by at least one member of an unmarried dating couple” adding stalking and sexual assault to the other abuses(Sugarman & Hotaling 1989, p. 5). Even though Intimate Partner Violence(IPV) and DV are not totally differentiated, IPV is more inclusively used as it refers to violence between sexually intimate persons of almost any age, education level, and marital status, compared to dating violence, which is not used for married or cohabitating relationships. Dating couples may or may not be sexually intimate and may or may not be heterosexual (Barnett et al., 2005).

In this review, 60 studies published between 1990 and 2007 were identified through social science and health databases, including PsycInfo, Pubmed, and CINAHL. Searching keywords include dating violence, courtship violence, dating relationship violence, dating abuse, dating aggression, adolescent (teen) partner violence, adolescent romantic relationship

violence.

The research participants who were investigated through the studies in this article range in age from preteen to college aged adolescents and youths in the United States.

In categorizing risk factors, this review grouped those into four domains (individual, family, school and peer, and community factors) based on the social ecological framework that has been widely used for identifying and examining human behaviors. The social ecological framework which includes both individual and environmental factors of human behavior also have been used in explaining multiple avenues of practical interventions including individual, family, and community efforts as well as environmental approaches.

In this review, the prevalence data and DV risk factors will be described, and prevention efforts for DV will be presented with a summary table.

III. Results

1. Prevalence

Prevalence data on dating violence among adolescents and youths is inconsistent. Dating violence prevalence among adolescents ranges from 3% to 46%, with single studies tending to report higher prevalence than national estimates. According to a review of overall dating violence prevalence studies conducted by Hickman and colleagues (2004), "perpetration estimates range from 26% to 46% for physical violence and 3% to 12% for sexual violence," and for

victimization, "estimates range from a low of 9% to a high of 23% for physical perpetration and victimization"(p. 126).

Furthermore, Hickman and his colleagues (2004) report that 10% of 12 to 15 year old girls and 22% of 10 to 16 year old girls were killed by an intimate partner between 1983-1990 based on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Supplementary Homicides reports. Data from the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System indicates that 9.8% of girls and 9.1% of boys surveyed reported physical violence inflicted by intimate partners(Grunbom et al. 2002), and in a longitudinal study conducted by Halpern and colleagues (2001), 32% of adolescents and youths aged 12-21 experienced any type of intimate partner violence. Reinforcing the importance of prevention education during the secondary school years, Himelein (1994) indicates that 38.5% of precollege women reported sexual victimization experiences in their dating relationships. Even though the range of prevalence is not consistent, a review report estimates that adolescents have DV experiences ranged from 26%-46% for physical perpetration and 3%-12% for sexual perpetration. The review also reports, for physical perpetration and victimization, estimates range from a low of 9% to a high of 23%(Hickman et al. 2004).

The majority of studies reviewed focused on examining the prevalence of physical and sexual violence rather than investigating emotional and verbal aggression. However, Halpern and colleagues(2001) reported that 29% of girls reported psychological violence in their romantic relationships.

If these two types of unrevealed violence, emotional and verbal, are added, overall prevalence rate of the adolescents and youths population will be raised, and it may address different directions of DV prevention program curriculum.

2. Risk factors

Research to identify risk factors of DV has been continuously accumulated, adding new perspectives on our existing knowledge. In the 1990s, researchers focused on basic individual demographic factors, such as gender, age, self esteem, aggressive behaviors, and family violence background. Recently, the body of DV risk factor literature shows that dating violence is also related to environmental factors such as the influence of one's peer group and exposure to violence in the community.

1) Individual factors

There is controversy over whether variables identified as a risk factor are causal or are a consequence of DV or simply a correlate. The debate frequently emerges in some domains discussing DV risk factors and seems to be most actively argued when intrapersonal factors of DV are discussed. For example, study findings have equally pointed to depression as both a precursors and consequences of DV(Roberts & Klein 2003, Vezina & Hebert 2007). In the current review, individual factors correlated with DV include self esteem, gender, race, substance use, number of partners, previous violence experience,

and others.

Self esteem

Researchers report that poor self-esteem is associated with adolescent dating violence for both genders (Ackard, Neumark-Sztainer, and Hannan 2003; Jezl, Molidor, and Wright 1996; Sharpe and Taylor 1999). However, findings from one study (O'keefe 1998) noted that low self-esteem was only related to perpetration and victimization of male adolescents. Jezl and his colleagues(1996) indicate there is not a significant correlation in terms of the relationship between the levels of self-esteem and individuals remaining in or terminating physically abusive dating relationships. However, the authors agree that lower self esteem is related to the psychological maltreatment experience.

Gender

Previous research indicates that dating violence victimization is more prevalent among females. However, several studies reported similar victimization rates between males and females or even higher victimization rates for males(Gover, 2004). In terms of gender difference in DV perpetration, research findings are similar. Magdol and colleagues(1997) state that "Community studies have consistently reported that more women than men are physically violent toward a partner" whereas clinical studies have revealed the opposite tendency.

Some research findings show that gender difference exists in using violence in dating relationships; men are more likely to employ violence to injure,

manipulate, intimidate, and control their partners whereas women tend to use violence as a defensive tool(Bookwala et al., 1992; Lewis & Fremouw, 2001; O'keefe, 1997).

Race

Although several studies have been conducted to examine whether a specific race is at greater or smaller risk in dating violence, sample sizes of most studies are too small to permit a meaningful interpretation. However, according to a national longitudinal study, the risk of dating violence victimization was about twice as higher for Black and Asian/Pacific Islander males than for White males (Halpern et al., 2001). Howard and Wang(1999) using a nationally representative sample also reported that being Black(Odds Ratio=2.32) or Hispanic(Odds Ratio=1.82) was associated with dating violence.

Substance use

Substance use including tobacco smoking, alcohol, and drug use has been shown to be a critical risk factor influencing both victimization and perpetration in dating relationships(Banyard et al., 2006; Buzy et al. 2004; Coker et al. 2000; Howard et al. 2003; Howard & Wang 2003; Silverman et al., 2001). There is controversy as to whether adolescents who experience DV are at greater risk for substance abuse or if substance abuse stimulates an increased risk of DV.

In a cross-sectional study targeting 5414 public high school students(Coker et al. 2000), the authors found that substance use is correlated with severe dating

violence. The study results show that adolescents who have used illegal drugs, anabolic steroids, tobacco, or alcohol are significantly more likely to report severe dating violence. Similarly, Banyard and colleagues(2006) reported that substance use such as cigarette smoking, marijuana use, inhalants use, and drinking is associated with the perpetration of either physical dating violence or sexual abuse in the adolescent population.

Previous researchers agree that alcohol use, in particular, is positively associated with dating violence. According to Synovitz and Byrne(1998), female college students who typically drank alcohol before or during a date were more likely to report sexual victimization. Small and Kern(1993) found that excessive alcohol use in the past month is related to unwanted sexual relationships. Buzy and her colleagues(2004) conducted both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies to identify the association of alcohol use and dating violence among adolescent girls. The results show that general alcohol use influences both physical-only violence and the combination of physical and sexual victimization. However, alcohol use is longitudinally associated with physical-only violence although the cross-sectional result was related to both physical-only and the combination of physical and sexual violence. The authors noted that it is not clear whether the violence experience leads to increased alcohol although several studies support reverse causation.

Number of partners

Krahe(1998) and Howard and Wang (1999) indicate that number of sexual partners is positively associated with a higher risk of sexual victimization among female adolescents. Halpern and colleagues (2001) also noted that 'having more than 1 partner during the 18-month reference period' was associated with higher odds of experiencing physical and psychological violence for both male and female adolescents. This is consistent with findings that the number of sexual partners is correlated with sexual victimization among female college students(Synovitz & Byrne, 1998). Neufeld and colleagues (Neufeld et al., 1999) found that college age women who have multiple previous sexual and emotional partners report higher rates of both physical and psychological violence.

Previous violence experience

Research shows that history of victimization plays a critical role in explaining dating violence perpetration and victimization. Most studies indicate that having a history of victimization is a strong risk factor of re-victimization in dating relationships. However, several studies examined how the history of victimization is related to being a DV perpetrator as well.

Himelein(1995) conducted a longitudinal study to identify correlations of nine risk factors(child sexual abuse, sexual victimization in dating occurring prior to college, consensual sexual experience, alcohol use in dating, assertiveness, and four attitudinal scales) and sexual dating violence among college women. Among the risk factors assessed in college

women prior to the start of college, having a sexual victimization experience in a pre-college dating relationship was the strongest predictor of sexual victimization in college. Banyard and colleagues also report that a history of dating violence victimization is most significantly associated with self-reported perpetration based on their multivariate level analysis(Banyard et al. 2006).

In terms of child abuse experience, in particular, Sanders and Moore(1999) found that female college students who have been sexually abused in childhood or early adolescence were more likely to report date rape experiences in college. Similarly, a study found that female adolescents who had been sexually abused by an adult were more vulnerable to unwanted sexual relationships(Small & Kerns 1993). According to Banyard and colleagues(Banyard et al., 2000), the experience of child sexual abuse was significantly related to being a victim of psychological and physical dating violence but not to sexual coercion. The authors suggest that this result can be interpreted to mean that such childhood experiences can influence other negative interpersonal experiences. Interestingly, Himelein(1995) suggests that the effect of child sexual abuse on dating victimization may be limited by time; "the more time that elapses from child sexual abuse without further incident of victimization, the less child sexual abuse contributes to overall vulnerability(to dating violence victimization)" (p. 44).

Other Individual factors(Self efficacy, unhealthy diet, antisocial behaviors in childhood and adolescence)

O'keefe(1998) found that male adolescents in low socioeconomic status have been involved in dating violence infliction and victimization where as female adolescents were not influenced by socioeconomic status in violent dating relationships. A study utilizing nationally representative samples shows that adolescent girls and boys from low socioeconomic backgrounds tend to report more dating violence experiences compared to youth from higher background(Ackard et al., 2003).

According to Walsh and Foshee(1998), self efficacy serves as a predictor of experiencing forced sexual violence among adolescent girls; self determination and victim blaming are not significant predictors.

In addition to these factors, new risk factors have emerged in recent dating violence research including unhealthy diet, antisocial behaviors in childhood and adolescence, etc. Silverman and colleagues report that adolescent girls engaged in unhealthy weight control (diet pill use, laxatives use, or vomiting to lose weight) were more likely to report dating violence. The authors suggest that such result might be related to previous studies which found the relationship between forced sexual experiences and eating disorders (Silverman et al., 2001). Woodward and colleagues(Woodward et al., 2002) found that young people who have had childhood and adolescent antisocial behavior problems are at greater risk of partner violence

perpetration and victimization even after controlling for general social, family, and individual factor.

2) Family factors

Family structure

One study reported that the divorce of parent strongly influences children's dating relationship particularly in conflict resolution(Billingham & Notevaert, 1993). The study shows that individuals coming from divorced family reported high scores on both the verbal aggression and violence subscales for their partners. Follingstad and colleagues(Follingstad et al., 1999) report that female victims of physical violence who have a family history of family violence tend to believe that physical domination can be fun in dating relationships and tend to romanticize jealousy and possessiveness. Among adolescents registered in a school dropout program, 71 percent of the females who have experienced dating violence grew up in a single mother household(Chase et al., 2002).

Parenting style

According to Small and Kerns(1993), female adolescents with parents who use an authoritative parenting style and did not monitor their behavior closely were more vulnerable to unwanted sexual relationships. Lavoie and colleagues (Lavoie et al., 2002) reported that there is a direct relationship between harsh parenting practices and involvement in dating violence. In addition to the family factors above, Noland and colleagues (Noland et al., 2004) suggest that experience

of sibling violence in adolescence is a predictor for college dating violence. Foshee and her colleagues (Foshee et al., 2004) also found that adolescents who had been hit by parents with the intention of harm were exposed to the risk of serious physical dating violence victimization.

3) School and Peer group

O'keefe (1998) suggests that exposure to community and school violence is related to the dating violence among adolescents. Particularly, peers seem to play an important role in adolescent romantic relationships as Connolly and colleagues (Connolly et al., 2000) have also suggested. Influence of peer group

Arriaga and Foshee(2004) found that friends seems to have greater influence than parents in establishing standards of dating behaviors during adolescence. Vicary and colleagues(Vicary et al., 1995) found that poor peer relationships are a predictor of sexual dating violence. Findings of a study by Sharpe and Taylor(1999) also revealed that poor peer relations were associated with physical and psychological victimization for female college students. Conversely, Foshee and her colleagues(2004) indicated that having a friend who has a friend with DV experience is a consistent predictor of DV victimization. According to a study of German adolescents conducted by Krahe(1998), boys, who have attempted or completed rape, reported that they perceived a stronger peer pressure toward high sexual activity. Small and Kerns (1993) report that female adolescents who had a

tendency to 'do things to please their peers' showed more vulnerability to unwanted sexual contact. In a study examining the relationship between dating violence and social contextual factors, peer-drinking exposure was a strong risk factor(Odds Ratio=3.24), implying that being in contexts that one's friends drinking alcohol is a risk factor for dating violence victimization among adolescents (Howard et al., 2003).

4) Community factors

Exposure to violence in community

Malik and colleagues(Malik et al., 1997) reported that exposure to weapons and injuries due to violence in community are strongly associated with both community and dating violence outcomes, specifically for both perpetration and victimization. A study found that living in a higher level of social disorder neighborhood and using substances are associated with increased risk of community violence victimization of women and Intimate partner violence(IPV) in turn. The authors of the study impose the significance of considering neighborhood factors in IPV study.

3. Preventions Efforts

1) Assessment Tools

Although there is few standardized assessment tool to measure dating violence, a few measures have been developed based on existing questionnaires originated for measuring intimate partner violence, such as the Conflict Tactic

Scales(CTS) (Hickman et al., 2004; O'keefe, 1997; Billingham & Notebaert, 1993). A study summarized that, among eight studies that sampled high school students, five of them utilized modified CTS as an instrument for understanding of prevalence of dating violence among adolescents(Hickman et al., 2004).

Wolfe and colleagues(Wolfe et al. 2001) developed the Conflict in Adolescent Dating Relationships Inventory(CADRI) to measure abusive behaviors among adolescent dating couples. The measure is divided into male and female version and designed to assess physical, sexual, and verbal and emotional abuse as well as threatening behavior, and relational aggression.

Lavoie and Vezina(2001) also introduced VIFFA(Violence faite aux Filles dans les Fréquentations à l'Adolescence - Violence Against Adolescent' Girls in the Context of Dating Relationships) as an instrument to measure physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. In the VIFFA developed by Lavoie and Vezina, girls are questioned on victimization experience and boys on violence inflicted(Lavoie & Vezina, 2001). In the study designed to examine preliminary validity of VIFFA , the factorial analysis revealed slightly different results for girls and boys. The factors for girls refer to Verbal and Emotional Abuse, Physical Abuse, Control through Jealousy, and Sexual Abuses. For boys, the factors included Psychological Abuse, Jealousy and Sexual Abuse, Severe Physical Abuse, and Minor Physical Abuse.

With regard to college student population,

Smith and colleagues(Smith et al. 2005) developed an instrument to evaluate attitudes toward intimate partner violence and examined its validity utilizing samples of Mexican American and non Hispanic White college students. This tool consists of the 30 items asking questioning attitudes toward psychological and verbal abuse, control, and physical abuse.

Intervention programs

It has been postulated that relationship violence can be prevented and reduced through public health approaches, such as dating violence prevention education (Amar & Gennaro, 2005; Avery-Leaf et al., 1997; Foshee et al., 2004; Jaycox et al., 2006); however, the evaluations of these interventions have been insufficient. Regarding the college student aged population, relatively little is known about prevention efforts; most of the studies that have been conducted in college or university settings primarily focus on the prevalence and incidence of dating violence, and no correlation to prevention attempts is noted(Daley & Noland, 2001). Nevertheless, the range of prevention program curriculum is changing from limited individual or school based interventions to more broad and comprehensive programs considering the importance of environmental factors surrounding target populations. Goals of prevention programs are also expanding from classroom education to increase individual knowledge and attitudes to culture change movement to improve the atmosphere allowing violent

behaviors<Table 1>.This review determined that:

- Most of the programs aim to increase knowledge about dating violence and available community resources and to change attitudes in a positive direction to prevent and/or reduce dating violence.
- The majority of interventions include school based prevention programs to increase student's knowledge and influence attitudes toward dating violence.
- Most of the prevention programs have been mainly delivered by regular school teachers, except one program in Canada(Hickman et al. 2004).
- The design of prevention education programs involves classroom lectures, multimedia assembly, community actions, and student working sessions, such as discussions and the development of action plans. However, in terms of the number of sessions, providing multiple sessions to increase the impact of education seems somewhat effective in terms of knowledge but not that as effective in addressing attitudes.
- To assess the effectiveness of the program, most evaluations are cross-sectional studies with controls utilizing pre and post tests about the program's content. Evaluation studies were conducted for limited time frame, ranging from one week to one year before and after intervention.

IV. Discussion

Although research on dating violence among adolescents has been continuously accumulated and it has contributed to a better understanding of prevalence, risk factors, and prevention efforts, several factors need to be improved including distinction of DV types and research design issues.

Distinction of DV types

Many researchers have not considered the distinction of DV types and target populations in designing their studies (Lewis and Fremouw 2001). However, when DV research is conducted, distinctions between victim and perpetrator, gender, and the classification among types of violence need to be made to produce accurate findings of prevalence and risk factors as well as effective intervention programs. In addition to existing efforts to classify violence types as physical, sexual, and psychological including verbal and emotional types, the distinction between intimate terrorism and situational couple violence is worthy to be made. Based on the findings from the National Violence against Women Survey, Johnson and Leone(Johnson and Leone2005) suggest that two distinct patterns of male violence

<Table 1> a separate ms word file attached

(1) Source	(2) Program goals	(3) program format	(4) time	(5) Target	(A) Sample	(B) Test format	(7)evaluation	(C) Effectiveness
Avery-Leaf et al. (2000)	Changing attitudes supporting violence, promotion of equality in dating relationships, improving communication skills, and education about available resources for victims	Standard classroom curriculum	Five sessions classroom	11 th - and 12 th - grad students	102 High school students	Justification of Interpersonal Violence Questionnaire	Positive justification of male-to-female interpersonal violence	impacts on items related to violence
Foshee et al. (2000)	Changing negative attitudes, building conflict management skills, and increasing knowledge about community resources utilizing the Safe Dates program	School community activities including classroom curriculum, school play, poster contest, service provider training	Not exactly reported	Adolescents	955 Junior High school students	(1 month and 1 year follow-up)	Significant positive changes at the 1 month follow-up period / positive changes diminished at the 1 year follow up period	
Jaffe et al. (1992)	Changing negative attitudes by increasing knowledge about DV and available resources utilizing the London Secondary Interventions Project on Violence in Intimate Relationships	(a) Educational assembly session + multimedia classroom discussions (b) classroom session + student working session	(a) 150 mins (90min + 1hr) (b) one day (2 half day sessions)	High school students	737 High school students	Survey of program participants with comparison groups	Both positive and undesirable or negative changes	
L. Jones (1998)	Increasing knowledge and Attitudes about DV and familiarity with available community resources utilizing MSCP (Minnesota School Curriculum Project)	Standard classroom curriculum	Five sessions classroom	Adults and youths	590 Junior High school students 600 High school students	Survey of program participants and comparison groups	Significant increase in knowledge	
Lavoie et al. (1995)	Increasing knowledge, Changing negative attitudes, and promoting equal intimate relationships	Classroom curriculum delivered by community organization representatives	Short form: 2 sessions / Long form: 4 sessions	10 th grade students	Short form: 238 students Long form: 236 students	Survey of program participants with comparison groups of each form	No difference overall in attitudes by program length/ Shorter program more effective to increase knowledge	
Macgowan (1997)	Increasing knowledge, changing negative attitudes, and promoting interpersonal strengths	Standard classroom curriculum	Five one hour sessions	Adults and adolescents	241 Middle school students	Survey of program participants and comparison groups (199)	Positive changes among participants	changes among program
Wolfe et al. (2005)	Educating the origins of abusive behavior and skill building, changing negative attitudes, and increasing social competence	Community activities	Eighteen 2 hour sessions	At risk adolescents	96 youths aged 14 to 16 years	Interview survey in a baseline multiple follow ups	Physical DV perpetration reduced	Significantly reduced

towards female intimate partners exist: intimate terrorism and situational couple violence. Compared to the victims of situational couple violence, victims of intimate terrorism show more serious outcomes such as more frequent attacks from a male partner, severe injuries, more symptoms of posttraumatic stress syndrome, and more use of pain-killers. They are also likely to leave their male partners more often and to acquire their own residence when they leave. Even though additional research is needed, the distinction between intimate terrorism and situational couple violence will aid in the development and implementation of more effective and practical intervention approaches.

Research design

Most researchers have relied on self-report survey methods in studying DV. In a few studies, qualitative methods were used such as audiotaping of couple's conversations and videotaping of couple's interpersonal conflict resolution (Lewis and Fremouw 2001). In addition to those qualitative approaches, other qualitative methods such as focus groups, role play, etc. also can provide good opportunities to observe and analyze interaction between couples. The body of research reviewed in the current study predominantly utilized cross sectional research methods to identify correlations between various risk factors and DV. However, if more longitudinal studies are conducted to examine causal relationships, it will contribute to developing a clearer picture of DV leading to the development

of effective intervention approaches particularly needed for adolescents and youths.

Sampling

The majority of the DV studies have concentrated on female populations (Amar and Gennaro, 2005; Buzy et al. 2004; Cyr, McDuff, and Wright 2006; Lehrer et al., 2006), and have excluded the school drop-out populations which are known to be a high risk group (Vezina and Hebert 2007). The limited proportion of ethnic minorities that are shown in previous DV studies also can threaten generalizability of study findings. Therefore, efforts to utilize representative sampling and to have research participants from various backgrounds are needed to capture the real magnitude and characteristics of DV.

Measures

As Smith and colleagues noted (Smith et al., 2005), existing measures have been developed and applied to research on prevalence and severity of interpersonal violence, and the trend is similarly shown in the current dating violence literature. Researchers need to focus on developing measures for risk factors which can be directly related to future victims and perpetrators in dating relationships. In addition, adequacy of scales used in dating violence research that mainly include adolescent and young adult populations needs to be carefully considered. For example, although most of the scales used in previous studies are modified or abbreviated versions of CTS,

the validity and reliability of those modified scales have been understudied. According to Wolfe and colleagues(2001), the unexamined translation of CTS from original version to modified version for adolescents brings up concerns about the developmental and structural appropriateness. For example, the “using children as a threat and control tactic” of CTS may not be appropriate for adolescents. It is significant to examine whether those scales reflect characteristics of the population sampled including the translation of existing measures.

Prevention research

Although violence prevention education programs have been initiated to help decrease the levels of intimate partner violence in young adolescents(Lavoie et al 1995; Lewis and Fremouw 2001), few studies have been conducted to rigorously evaluate the effect of domestic violence prevention programs. As seen in the Table 1, studies are limited by small sample size and tend to provide descriptive data without sophisticated analytical reports. Measurement of the effectiveness of prevention programs is not systematically conducted. In addition to making efforts to develop effective programs, systematic evaluation methods also need to be applied to DV prevention research.

V. Conclusion

Research on dating violence among adolescents and college-aged youth has continuously grown during the last twenty

years in the United States. It has not only provided a more in-depth understanding of the prevalence and risk factors of dating violence, but also resulted in the increased development of assessment tools to measure DV and a wider variety of prevention efforts. Nevertheless, further studies to reduce existing limitations in the current body of literature are needed. Considering that the prevalence of DV is not clear, but appears significant, and that the adolescent period is critical in the initiation of dating relationships with the potential of future victimization, prevention efforts need to be intensively expanded. Therefore, DV prevention should be a priority in social and political agendas, particularly in the direction of mandating the DV curricula at high schools. Additionally, more standardized instruments that assess DV and that can capture unique characteristics of young dating couples need to be developed. Efforts to develop practical DV programs that are adjusted for specific populations, such as young girls and adolescents who drop out of school, also should be made with more accurate methodologies that can be evaluated for effectiveness.

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