

1 in 5 high school girls 'experience teen dating violence'

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More than 20% of female and 10% of male high school students in the US have experienced some form of teen dating violence during the past year. This is according to a new study published in the journal *JAMA Pediatrics*.

Both sexual and physical teen dating violence was reported in 6.4% of female students and 3.3% of male students during the past 12 months, according to the study results.

Study author Kevin J. Vagi, PhD, of the Division of Violence Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and colleagues reached their findings by analyzing 2013 data from the CDC's national Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS).

The CDC define teen dating violence (TDV) as "the physical, sexual psychological or emotional violence within a dating relationship, including stalking."

TDV has been associated with a number of short- and long-term complications, such as depressive symptoms and [suicidal thoughts](#), eating disorders, risky sexual behaviors and increased risk of drug and alcohol use.

For the first time since its launch in 1999, the 2013 YRBS survey has gathered information on high school students' exposure to more serious forms of physical and sexual TDV and has excluded students who were not dating.

Vagi and colleagues note that previous data from the YRBS has estimated the prevalence of TDV in the US to stand at around 9%. But the researchers hypothesized that the new questions included in the 2013 YRBS would provide a more accurate estimate.

Health-risk behaviors more common in students who suffer both sexual, physical TDV

To assess the prevalence of physical TDV, the survey asked 9,900 high school students who dated during the previous 12 months how many times someone "physically hurt them on purpose."

Prevalence of sexual TDV was assessed with the question: "How many times did someone you were dating or going out with force you to do sexual things that you did not want to do?"

The survey also assessed the prevalence of health-risk behaviors among the students, including suicidal ideation and drug and alcohol use.

The results of the survey revealed that around 1 in 5 (20.9%) female students and 1 in 10 (10.4%) male students reported experiencing some form of TDV in the past 12 months.

Around 6.6% of female students and 4.1% of male students reported experiencing physical TDV only in the past year, while 8% of female students and 2.9% of male students reported experiencing sexual TDV only.

Both sexual and physical TDV was reported in 6.4% of female students and 3.3% of male students during the past 12 months. These students were more likely to experience all health-risk behaviors related to TDV, while those who reported no TDV were least likely to experience such behaviors.

The authors say the updated YRBS provides a more "relevant and robust" estimate of TDV. They add:

"As a result, the field has new national prevalence estimates of TDV for high school students who experienced physical or sexual TDV or

both. We further demonstrated that those who experience different forms of TDV are at risk for multiple other health-risk behaviors.

Future work should examine in more detail the frequency of physical and sexual TDV and the effect that a higher frequency of TDV has on negative health outcomes."

In 2012, *Medical News Today* reported on a study published in the journal *Pediatrics*, in which researchers found victims of TDV were more likely to experience adverse health outcomes in adulthood.