



CHRONIC DISEASE BURDEN UPDATE

■ This update focuses on the burden of teen dating violence in Illinois. April 3-9, 2016 is National Youth Violence Prevention week and April is National Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month.

Teen dating violence is defined as physical, sexual, psychological, or emotional violence within a dating relationship, including stalking. It can occur in person or electronically, and can occur with dating partners both past and present.

Dating violence is widespread and incurs long-term and short-term effects. Most teens choose not to report it because they are scared to tell their friends and family. A 2011 U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention nationwide survey found that 23% of females and 14% of males who ever experienced rape, physical violence, or stalking by an intimate partner, first experienced some form of partner violence between 11 and 17 years of age.

TEEN DATING VIOLENCE STATISTICS

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) collects responses from high school students on teen dating violence, both physical and sexual, during the past 12 months. In Illinois in 2013, among teens who had dated in the previous year, nearly 16 percent of teens 15 years of age and younger responded that they were sexually assaulted compared to students 18 and older (7.8%). There were no significant differences by race/ethnicity of students who responded that they experienced physical or sexual assault. About 1 in 10 high school students responded they experienced physical hurt and unwanted sexual experiences in the past 12 months.

Table 1. Percent of high school students in past dating relationships indicating physical or sexual assault by someone they were dating, by age and race/ethnicity, Illinois, 2013

	Physical Assault *		Sexual Assault**	
	Percent	95% CI [^]	Percent	95% CI [^]
Age				
15 or younger	11.2	(8.4 - 14.7)	15.6	(11.7 - 20.3)
16 or 17	10.9	(8.4 - 13.9)	10.5	(8.9 - 12.3)
18 or older	11.9	(7.7 - 17.9)	7.8	(5.6 - 10.9)
Race/Ethnicity				
Black	14.2	(11.3 - 17.6)	11.5	(8.1 - 16.0)
Hispanic/Latino	12.4	(8.8 - 17.1)	12.7	(10.0 - 15.9)
White	9.7	(7.5 - 12.4)	11.6	(9.1 - 14.7)

*Among students who dated or went out with someone during the past 12 months, the percentage who had been physically hurt on purpose by someone they were dating or going out with one or more times during the past 12 months.

**Among students who dated or went out with someone during the past 12 months, the percentage who had been forced by someone they were dating or going out with to do sexual things that they did not want to one or more times during the past 12 months.

[^]The 95% Confidence Interval (CI) is shown as an indication of the margin of error because YRBS is a weighted survey
Source: Illinois YRBS, 2013

How does dating violence affect health?

Dating violence can have a negative effect on health throughout life. Youth who are victims are more likely to experience symptoms of depression and anxiety, engage in unhealthy behaviors, like using tobacco, drugs, and alcohol, or exhibit antisocial behaviors and think about suicide. Youth who are victims of dating violence in high school are at higher risk for victimization during college.

Who's at risk for dating violence?

Factors that increase risk for harming a dating partner include:

- Belief that dating violence is acceptable
- Depression, anxiety, and other trauma symptoms
- Aggression towards peers and other aggressive behavior
- Substance use
- Early sexual activity
- Having a friend involved in dating violence
- Conflict with partner
- Witnessing or experiencing violence in the home

How can we prevent dating violence?

The ultimate goal is to stop dating violence before it starts. Strategies that promote healthy relationships are vital. During the preteen and teen years, young people are learning skills they need to form positive relationships with others. This is an ideal time to promote healthy relationships and prevent patterns of dating violence that can last into adulthood.

Many prevention strategies are proven to prevent or reduce dating violence. Some effective school-based programs change norms, improve problem-solving, and address dating violence in addition to other youth risk behaviors, such as substance use and sexual risk behaviors. Other programs prevent dating violence through changes to the school environment or training influential adults, like parents/caregivers and coaches, to work with youth to prevent dating violence.

Understanding Teen Dating Violence Fact Sheet, 2014