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Abstract

Physical Dating Violence in Georgia: A Growing Disparity among Hispanic Youth

By

Britni Knott

April 24, 2017

Background:

Nationally representative data of high school students in the U.S. indicate that levels of physical dating violence are higher among students in Georgia than in most states. This study seeks to understand the increased risk for physical dating violence among youth in Georgia and make recommendations for prevention and interventions.

Methods:

Analyses were conducted using the 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, a nationally representative dataset sampling of high school students in grades 9-12 in the United States. Data from a total of 13,583 adolescents were used in the study. Physical dating violence was defined as reporting being hit, slammed into something, or injured with an object or weapon on purpose by someone they were dating or going out with among students who dated or went out with someone during the 12 months before the survey. Cross-sectional analyses of the prevalence of physical dating violence victimization by demographic characteristics will be conducted.

Results:

In the U.S. overall, 10.3% of high school students report any physical dating violence. Among the 38 states including data on physical dating violence in 2013, the state of Georgia ranked third highest (12.4%) only preceded by Louisiana (14.8%) and Arkansas (13.8%) for reports of physical dating violence. In Georgia, physical dating violence did not differ by grade level or by sex. However, in terms of race/ethnicity, Hispanic youth (18.1%) were significantly more likely than African American youth (9.6%) or of white youth (10.7%) to report physical dating violence.

Conclusion:

The state of Georgia has high levels of physical dating violence among high school youth and Hispanic high school students are more likely to report physical dating victimization compared to their peers. Culturally specific risk factors and influences may be an important factor for public health professionals and policy makers to explore to reduce the health disparity and adverse health outcomes associated with dating violence among youth.

Physical Dating Violence in Georgia: A Growing Disparity among Hispanic Youth

by

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B.S., Howard University

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of Georgia State University in Partial Fulfillment
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30303

APPROVAL PAGE

Physical Dating Violence in Georgia: A Growing Disparity among Hispanic Youth

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Author's Statement Page

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Britni Knott

Signature of Author

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

Teen dating violence (TDV) is a significant public health issue defined as the physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse within a dating relationship, including stalking. Approximately 1.5 million high school students are physically abused by dating partners each year. The mental and physical health consequences of teen dating violence can extend into adulthood. Unhealthy relationships in adolescence can create a cycle of abusive relationships throughout a person's life. The development and implementation of effective, tailored intervention and prevention strategies are pertinent to stopping this cycle. Healthy People 2020 lists dating violence among youth as an area that needs further research, analysis, and monitoring to better understand the trends, causes, and prevention strategies related to TDV [1].

TDV has both short and long term negative effects on the physical and mental health of victimized youth. These youth are more likely to experience symptoms of depression and anxiety, participate in unhealthy behaviors such as drug and alcohol use, exhibit antisocial behavior, and express suicide ideation. It is important to understand which youth are more vulnerable to experiencing violence in their relationships. Risk factors linked to an increased likelihood for teen dating violence include substance use, belief that dating violence is acceptable, witnessing or experiencing violence in the home, having a friend involved in dating violence, depression and anxiety, and having conflicts with a partner [2].

Although teen dating violence transcends race, gender, and sexuality, certain subgroups are more likely to experience TDV compared to others. Comparing TDV reports at the state level reveals varying prevalence rates and disproportionate reports of victimization among certain

racial/ethnic groups. Nationally representative data reveal that approximately 10% of high school students in the U.S. reported physical victimization from a dating partner. Physical dating violence occurs when a partner is hit, slapped, shoved, pinched, kicked or punched. Data from the 2013 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) show that levels of dating violence are higher among students in Georgia than in most states. It is not sufficient to know that teen dating violence affects a certain group of people in a certain area. Research is needed to find out why.

1.2 Purpose of Study

Research is needed to help understand the high prevalence of teen dating violence among youth in Georgia and make recommendations for prevention and intervention strategies.

Utilizing the 2013 YRBS, this study will compare the prevalence of teen dating violence on a state level and examine the prevalence of teen dating violence across demographic subgroups in Georgia. I hypothesize that Hispanic high school students will be more likely to experience physical dating violence compared to their peers.

1.3 Research Questions

- What is the prevalence of physical dating violence among high school students in Georgia?
- How does the prevalence of physical dating violence among high school students in Georgia compare to the rest of the U.S.?
- Does the prevalence of physical dating violence among high school students vary for demographic subgroups within Georgia (i.e., race, sex or grade level)?
- Are there any changes in physical dating violence prevalence among high school students from 2013 to 2015?

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

2.1 Overview of Teen Dating Violence

Dating violence is manifested in various forms, including physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse by a dating partner. Physical forms of dating abuse include intentional hitting, slapping, or being physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend. There are various terms used to describe TDV including intimate partner violence, dating abuse, domestic abuse, domestic violence, and relationship abuse [3]. Teens, however, define and describe dating violence in various ways unique to their beliefs and understanding. It is important to understand the ways in which teenagers interpret dating abuse to better understand the issue in various contexts and social interactions. A study among Canadian 9th and 11th grade students found that youth defined behaviors as abusive only in certain contexts. For instance hitting or name calling may be abusive in one context, but not in another context. It may not be considered abusive if it is perceived as a demonstration of love or if the person is “joking” [4]. Gender differences were present throughout the study as male students defined abuse by its intent, while females measured abuse by its impact. More findings from this study revealed that boys used more physical abuse, compared to girls who were more likely to use psychological abuse. Youth disclosed that fear and embarrassment were factors that hindered them from disclosing or reporting dating victimization [4]. These findings are consistent with the DAVILA study which reported approximately 37% of Latino teen victims of dating violence sought neither formal nor informal help, due to various reasons including embarrassment, wanting to keep the abuse private, or not recognizing they were abused [5]. Estimates among all youth show as little as 1 in 11 victimization incidents are reported to adults [6].

Dating violence victimization occurs in various settings including school, community, home, and other private dwellings. A substantial number of dating violence incidents occur in school or on school grounds. A study of high school students ages 13 to 18 found that 42% of males and 43.2% of females who reported dating victimization stated the incident transpired in a school building or surrounding grounds [7]. Research suggests that school climates, values, and norms regarding violence may influence teen dating violence perpetration and victimization. According to the social learning theory, new patterns of behaviors can be acquired through direct experience or by observing others' behaviors [8]. This can explain why high school students exposed to violence in their communities and schools are more likely to exhibit violent or aggressive behaviors. However, observing violence is not a single factor or precursor to adopting a pro-violence attitude. An analysis of dating violence among African-American and Latino high school students found that exposure to school violence is a significant predictor of TDV perpetration among males and females when co-occurred with exposure to interparental violence [9]. A study assessing the relationship between school climate and violent risk behaviors found that students who felt teasing and bullying were widespread in their school had a higher likelihood to engage in these same risk behaviors [10]. These findings may also be applicable to witnessing and being exposed to teen dating violence in schools or being influenced by peer dating norms, such as dating abuse or lack of relationship exclusivity [11]. These studies suggest that high school students' views and beliefs on dating violence may be shaped by broader peer networks and social influences stemming from larger contexts such as schools.

Dating violence affects heterosexual and same-sex couples, as well as youth of different gender, racial background, and socioeconomic status. However, females experience the highest rate of intimate partner violence compared to males. From 1994 to 2010, approximately 4 in 5

victims of intimate partner violence were female [12]. Due to significant variations among TDV research studies, prevalence among adolescents varies based on the time frame of the study, the population surveyed, and how dating violence is defined. For instance, a study using a nationally representative sample of adolescents found that the prevalence of severe dating violence was approximately 2.7% for girls and 0.6% for boys, equating to about 335,000 girls and 78,000 boys. This study assessed lifetime prevalence and defined severe dating violence as any form of physical abuse, sexual abuse, and/or rape perpetrated by a girlfriend, boyfriend, or other dating partner [13]. Results from the National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence found that overall TDV rates ranged from 1.4% to 7.5%, depending on inclusion criteria, while the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health found that 32% reported dating violence victimization (verbal and physical) [14]. Despite variabilities in prevalence reported in studies, teen dating violence is a significant public health concern.

Few studies on adolescent dating violence have assessed the frequency of all types of dating violence victimization and number of abusive partners. A retrospective study among college students found that 64.7% of females and 61.7% of males reported experiencing any type of dating violence (physical, sexual, and psychological/emotional) from age 13 to 19 [15]. More than one-third of abused females reported having two or more perpetrators. The majority of TDV victims reported experiencing 2 to 5 incidents of each type of dating violence. However, approximately 15% of females and males reported 20 or more occurrences for certain dating violence types [15]. This study faced several limitations such as lack of generalizability due to a predominately White sample of young adults and potential recall bias. However, these important findings reveal that TDV does not occur in isolated incidents, which adds to the urgency to prevent dating violence before it occurs.

Research shows that violence overall, including intimate partner violence, has declined substantially. The Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) Supplementary Homicide Reports reveal that 10% of girls ages 12 to 15 and 22% of girls ages 16 to 19, murdered between 1993 and 1999, were killed by an intimate partner [16]. Since 1993, the overall rate of intimate partner violence has drastically declined, from 9.8 victimizations per 1,000 persons age 12 or older to 3.6 per 1,000 [12]. Data from the YRBS 1999 to 2011 was used to assess the prevalence rate of physical dating violence over a 12-year period and examine any trends based on gender and race/ethnicity. This study revealed that there were no significant changes in the overall rate of physical dating violence victimization reports from 1999 to 2011. The physical dating violence rate remained steady among females and there was a minimal increase among males. Across this 12-year period, the prevalence among Black (12.9%) and Multiracial (12.2%) high school students was significantly greater than among White (8.0%), Asian (8.0%), and Hispanic youth (10.5%) [17]. However, the prevalence among Hispanic youth was significantly greater than among Whites. This study found a trend among Hispanic males, who experienced a small, yet statistically significant increase in dating violence victimization during the study period [17]. This analysis revealed that physical dating violence victimization among US high school students has neither increased nor decreased, but an overall prevalence rate of 9 to 10% remains an issue requiring prevention efforts in communities and schools.

2.2 Youth Dating Violence Outcomes

Studies have found that dating violence victimization has an impact on the physical and psychological health of youth and is associated with a multitude of adverse health outcomes. One of the most severe results of dating violence is homicide. Among the 63.1% of homicides from 1980 to 2008 for which the victim/ offender relationships were known, 17% percent of 12 to 17

year old girls murdered between 1980 and 2008 were murdered by their dating partners. Among murdered males, ages 12 to 17, 0.5% was killed by a dating partner [18]. Not only are females reported to be more likely to experience dating abuse, murdered female victims were more likely than male victims to be killed by an intimate or dating partner.

Data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, a nationally representative sample of US high schools and middle schools, was used to assess the outcomes of 12 to 18 year old adolescents who experienced physical and psychological dating violence. Five years post-victimization, female participants reported increased heavy episodic drinking, depressive symptoms, smoking, suicidal ideation, and adult IPV victimization, while male participants reported increased antisocial behaviors, suicidal ideation, marijuana use, and adult IPV victimization [19]. Another study found that females who experienced physical and sexual dating violence victimization from age 13 to 19 were at increased risk of eating disorders, depressive symptoms, smoking, and engaging in risky sexual behavior (having five or more sexual partners) in late adolescence [20].

Not only are victimized teens more likely to experience adverse health outcomes and exhibit risky behaviors, they are also more likely to be victims of more than one type of dating violence. Studies of co-occurring victimizations find that being victimized by a peer was highly associated with being a victim of physical teen dating violence. Additionally, youth who experienced dating violence victimization also reported sexual victimization. Sexual victimization by a non-dating partner was a predictor of serious dating violence victimization. Revictimization is another potential adverse outcome for individuals that experience teen dating violence. A study found that adolescent dating violence was directly associated with physical intimate partner violence (IPV) experienced 5 years later in young adulthood and indirectly

associated with physical IPV experienced 12 years later in adulthood [21]. These findings stress the vitality of preventing and intervening unhealthy dating relationships during adolescence.

Dating violence among youth has been shown to be associated with high school students' school connectedness and violent risk behaviors. Findings from the 2003 YRBS revealed that lower self-reported grades in school were associated with higher reports of physical dating violence; 6.1% of students who received mostly A's reported physical dating violence victimization compared with 13.7% of students receiving mostly D's or F's. Additionally, physical dating violence was significantly associated with four other risk behaviors that contribute to violence: currently sexually active, attempted suicide, episodic heavy drinking, and physical fighting [22]. An analysis of the 2013 YRBS found that high school students who experienced all types of TDV (physical only, sexual only, both physical and sexual, and any) were more likely to report missing school because of the following risk behaviors: they felt unsafe, having a physical fight at school, carrying a weapon at school, and being bullied on school property [23]. Victimized Latino youth also experience adverse school outcomes related to dating violence. Thirty-one percent of participants in the DAVILA study that reported dating violence victimization were suspended from school and 3.1% dropped out of school. Additionally, 15% received special education services, which was associated with experiencing physical dating violence [5].

2.3 Physical Dating Violence among Hispanic youth

In efforts to address physical dating violence disparities among Hispanic youth in Georgia, it is important to examine cultural-specific risk and protective factors. According to Georgia Latino Health Report, Hispanic youth in Georgia show higher levels of depression than their non-Hispanic peers. Depressive symptoms are consistent with acculturative stress, the

psychological impact of adaptation to a new culture [24]. Acculturative stress, in addition to cultural gender roles may further exacerbate ethnic based disparities for TDV among Hispanics. However, other cultural factors such as ethnic pride and family cohesion may serve as strong protective factors against physical dating violence.

Dating Violence Among Latino Adolescents (DAVILA) study, which examined Latino adolescents aged 12 to 18 over a period of time, found that 19.5% of Latino teens, approximately 1 in 5, experienced dating violence in 2012 [5]. Physical dating violence was experienced among 6.6% of Latino youth, while psychological dating violence was the most reported (14%). Unlike most reports that find females to be more likely to experience dating violence, Latino males in this study were significantly more likely to report any dating violence [5]. This finding is similar to the interesting trend revealed in an analysis of YRBS 1999-2010, which found an increase in physical dating violence among Hispanic male youth. Girls reported more attempted rape compared to males who reported more incidents of being slapped, pushed, shoved, threatened, and had partners insist sex.

Data from DAVILA was used to evaluate associations between dating violence, cultural factors, and risks of subsequent dating victimization. [25] Latino teens who experienced physical dating violence victimization were 7.7 times more likely to experience sexual dating violence victimization in the same year compared to someone who did not experience physical dating violence [25]. These findings support that dating types overlap and victims are more prone to experience two types of dating violence. Although a lack of studies research co-occurring victimization among Hispanics specifically, the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (ADD) found that of Latino victimized adolescents, 9.9% continued to be victims through young adulthood, while 7.8% of Latino teens discontinued being victims after adolescence.

Twenty-seven percent of Latino dating partners studied experienced the onset of victimization as young adults.

Research suggests that the loss of culture-specific factors due to acculturation may increase rates of IPV as Latinos in the United States becomes more acculturated. A study that assessed acculturation, ethnic identity, and dating violence victimization among Latino high school students found language used in the home, parental birthplace, importance of ethnicity, and ethnic discrimination were significantly associated with dating violence victimization for females. Parental birthplace outside of the United States was significantly associated with a reduced likelihood of dating violence victimization among females [26]. Adolescent females who reported both parents were born outside the United States were 41% less likely to report dating violence compared with those whose parents were born in the United States [26]. Additionally, females who indicated their ethnicity was very important had a reduced likelihood (20%) of dating violence victimization. Increased dating violence victimization among females was strongly associated with reports of ethnic discrimination, as those who perceived discrimination were more than twice as likely to report dating violence [26]. This study suggests that greater acculturation may be associated with greater prevalence of dating violence victimization among females. These findings are similar to reports from DAVILA which found that teens that were high on Latino orientation had lower odds of experiencing any dating violence, than those low on Latino orientation. This difference in victimization reports could be due to cultural values that emphasize connectedness, family support, and the benefit of the collective group [5].

Multiple community and school based TDV prevention programs have been developed to educate youth on dating violence and foster healthy dating behaviors. However, most of these

programs are not geared toward predominately Hispanic youth populations. There is also scarcity of research studies that examine the effectiveness of TDV prevention programs in reducing victimization and perpetration specifically among Hispanic teens [27]. A review of existing research found that only three TDV prevention programs have been developed and empirically studied that focused on a predominately Hispanic population, with only one addressing the role of Hispanic cultural factors such as ethnic pride and traditional gender roles [27]. Only one of these three studies examined the long-term effects of TDV interventions for this specific population. This study assessed the immediate and six month outcomes of Break the Cycle's Ending Violence curriculum in urban schools with a student population of at least 80% Latinos. Among study participants, there was increased knowledge about legal rights associated with dating violence, higher likelihood victims would seek help, increased positive perceptions about seeking help, and less acceptance of female perpetration against males [9]. However, at follow-up, there were no changes in reports of dating violence victimization or perpetration or recent abusive dating experiences. The findings reveal the benefits of dating violence prevention programs geared towards Latino youth, but also suggest that actual behavioral changes may be difficult to achieve with brief prevention curriculums alone.

2.4 Teen Dating Violence Policies

Federal law and many state laws define domestic violence as abuse perpetrated by a current or former spouse, co-habitant, or co-parent. Legislation pertaining to dating violence among adolescents varies considerably from state to state. In certain states, domestic violence laws apply only to individuals 18 years and older who are in specific types relationships, which often include cohabitating. However, other states have domestic violence laws that protect individuals 16 years of age and older even if they are not involved in cohabitating relationships

[16]. Georgia's domestic violence law, Family Violence Act, protects those who are abused by current or former spouses, parents of the same child, parents and children, stepparents and stepchildren, foster parents and foster children, or persons currently or formerly living in the same household. This law does not apply to romantic relationships where individuals have never lived together. Consequently, many victimized youth in Georgia are not easily able to obtain protective orders or protection from partner abuse.

Studies have found that young victims of physical dating violence often experience abuse on school grounds, but there is a lack of school policies establishing safety, security, and intervention for students experiencing dating violence. Georgia Code “§ 20-2-314 Development of rape prevention, personal safety education, and teen dating violence prevention programs” requires the Georgia State Board of Education to develop a rape prevention and personal safety education program and a program to prevent teen dating violence for grades 8-12 [28]. However, schools are not required to implement such programs; they are only encouraged to do so. Local boards may implement these programs at any time they deem necessary and for any grade level. In addition to lack of school-based prevention programs and policies related to teen dating violence, school personnel are not equipped with the tools needed to respond to dating violence incidents.

A national study of randomly sampled high school counselors found that 81.3% did not have a protocol in their schools to respond to TDV incidents. Additionally, 90% of counselors reported that training to assist survivors of TDV had not been provided to personnel in the past two years. The majority of counselors (83%) also reported their school did not administer periodic student surveys to assess dating violence behaviors and 76% reported their school did not have a committee that meets to address health issues, including TDV [29].

Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships, lasting from 2008 to 2012, was a national program that promoted healthy relationships among 11 to 14 year olds, developed prevention strategies, and influenced TDV policy changes. An evaluation of the program found positive impacts on student behaviors, as well as progress on policies related to youth dating violence. By fall 2012, over half of the *Start Strong* communities achieved policy changes to TDV-related school district policies. Additionally, *Start Strong* sites provided technical assistance and increased awareness to inform changes to state legislation, strengthening state legislation in three states [30]. This evaluation shows the importance of conducting policy assessments on local levels and how policy can be used to increase legislative support for TDV prevention.

CHAPTER III

Methods

3.1 Data Source

This study used data from the 2013 YRBS Survey conducted by CDC. The YRBS, an element of the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), is a national school-based survey that is conducted biennially and provides data representative of students in grades 9–12 attending U.S. high schools. YRBSS data are used to compare prevalence of health behaviors among students, monitor progress in improving health outcomes among youth, assess trends in health risk behaviors, and help create and evaluate health policies and programs. Additionally, YRBSS provides comparable national, state, territorial, and large urban school district data. Nationally representative data for YRBS is provided by surveys conducted by states, territories, tribal governments, and large urban school districts that receive funding from CDC [31].

The YRBS utilizes a three-stage cluster sample of students from a target population of public and private students in grades 9-12 in all 50 states and the District of Columbia [32]. The selected sample produces estimates that are accurate within $\pm 5\%$ at a 95% confidence level [31]. Fifty-four of 1,276 primary sampling units (PSUs) were sampled from the first-stage sampling frame. In the second stage of sampling, 193 schools with any of grades 9–12 were sampled. The third stage of sampling consisted of random sampling in each of grades 9–12 and all students in sampled classes were eligible to participate [32]. Student privacy is protected by voluntary and anonymous participation and parental permission procedures are followed before surveys are administered.

The 2013 YRBS questionnaire contained 86 questions and were completed in 148 of 193 sampled public and private schools for a 77% school response rate. The student response rate was 88%. Out of 15,583 sample students, 13,633 submitted questionnaires and fifty questionnaires were excluded due to failed quality control, leaving 13,583 questionnaires for analysis [32]. Of 13,583 sample students, 50% were female, 55.6% were White, and 27.3% were in 9th grade. The overall response rate was 68% [33]. In Georgia specifically, the student sample size equaled 1,992 with a school response rate of 70%, a student response rate of 87%, and an overall response rate of 61% [32]. Of these students, 50.5% were male, 46.1% were White, and 29.8% in 9th grade.

3.2 Variables

Physical dating violence was defined by a response to the following question: “During the past 12 months, how many times did someone you were dating or going out with, physically hurt you on purpose? (Count such things as being hit, slammed into something, or injured with an object or weapon).” Participants answered with one of the following responses: “I did not date or go out with anyone during the past 12 months”, “0 times”, “1 time”, “2 or 3 times”, “4 or 5 times,” or “6 or more times.”

Demographic subgroups of interest included gender (male or female), race (American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White, or Multiple Race), and grade level (9th, 10th, 11th, or 12th). Race/ethnicity was computed from the following two questions and response choices: “Are you Hispanic or Latino? Yes or No” and “What is your race? (Select one or more responses)

American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, White.”

3.3 Analysis

Data was analyzed utilizing YRBSS Youth Online, a data-query application used to view survey results, create tables and graphs, examine trends, and compare results from different geographical locations. Youth Online was used to determine statistical differences between physical dating violence reports by race, gender, and grade level. It was also used to compare physical dating violence reports between states and compare prevalence rates between 2013 and 2015.

YRBS Survey results were accessed by first selecting the criteria for survey type (High School) and then selecting the health topic (Unintentional Injuries and Violence) and question (Experienced physical dating violence). The location (All locations, United States, Georgia) and year (2013) were then selected to retrieve survey results. Data for subgroups were viewed by selecting race, grade, and sex variables.

Differences between 2 data points were computed using T-tests generated by Youth Online. T-tests were conducted to compare the following variables: physical dating violence prevalence in 2013 and 2015; physical dating violence reports among Blacks, Whites, and Hispanics; physical dating violence reports among males and females; physical dating violence reports among grades 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th; physical dating violence reports between Georgia and the United States.

CHAPTER IV

Results

There was no change in physical dating violence among high school students nationwide from 2013 (10.3%; 95% CI: 9.2, 11.4) to 2015 (9.6%; 95% CI 8.8, 10.6), $p = .38$. Among the 73.9% of students nationwide who were involved in dating, 10.3% had been hit, slammed into something, or injured with an object or weapon on purpose by their partner one or more times during the 12 months before the survey. The prevalence of physical dating violence among high school students varied across demographic subgroups (Table 2). The findings show that gender differences exist in teen physical dating violence incidences nationwide as female students were more likely to experience physical dating violence than males. The prevalence of physical dating violence nationwide was higher among female (13.0%; 95% CI: 11.6, 14.5) than male (7.4%; 95% CI: 6.4, 8.6) high school students. Students in 12th grade (11.7%; 95% CI: 10.4, 13.2) were more likely to experience physical dating violence compared to students in 9th grade (8.8%; 95% CI: 7.6, 10.2).

Nationwide, there were no significant differences found between physical dating violence experienced by Hispanics (10.4%; 95% CI: 9.0, 10.0) and Whites (9.7%; 95% CI: 8.2, 11.5), $p = .50$. No significant differences were found between physical dating violence experienced by Hispanic (10.4%; 95% CI: 9.0, 10.0) and Black high school students (10.3%; 95% CI: 8.5, 12.4), $p = 0.91$. Additionally, no significant differences were found between physical dating violence reports by White (9.7%; CI 95%: 8.2, 11.5), and Black students (10.3%; 95% CI: 8.5, 12.4), $p = .069$.

Among the 38 states that reported data on physical dating violence, the prevalence of physical dating violence ranged from 7.0% to 14.8% in 2013. Georgia ranked third highest

(12.4%) only preceded by Louisiana (14.8%) and Arkansas (13.8%) for reports of physical dating violence. The prevalence of teen dating violence did not vary for gender and grade-level in Georgia, however it did vary for race. In Georgia there was no statistical difference in physical dating violence reports between male (11.6%; CI: 9.1, 14.7) and female high school students (12.9%; %95 CI: 9.9, 16.5), $p = .42$. There were also no statistical differences between grade levels 9th (11.7%; 95% CI: 7.7, 17.3), 10th (12.5%; 95% CI: 9.0, 17.0), 11th (12.5%; 95% CI: 7.9, 19.1), and 12th (11.1%; 95% CI 7.4, 16.4).

The prevalence of physical dating violence in Georgia among Hispanic high school students (18.1%) was significantly higher compared to Whites (10.7%) and African-Americans (9.6%) (Figure 1). In Georgia, Hispanics (18.1%; 95% CI: 13.2, 24.2) were more likely to experience physical dating violence compared to African-Americans (9.6%; 95% CI: 6.8, 13.3), $p = 0.02$. Hispanics were also more likely to experience physical dating violence compared to Whites (10.7%; 95% CI: 8.3, 13.8) $p = 0.03$. Hispanics in Georgia (18.1%; 95% CI: 13.2, 24.2) were more likely to experience physical dating violence compared to Hispanics nationwide (10.4%; 95% CI: 9.0, 10.0), $p = 0.01$. Additionally, males in Georgia (11.6%; CI: 9.1, 14.7) were more likely to experience physical dating violence compared to males nationwide (7.4%; 95% CI: 6.4, 8.6), $p = 0.01$. There were no differences in physical dating violence likelihood between grade levels in Georgia and the United States.

CHAPTER V

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study reveal prevalence of physical dating violence among high school students in the United States has not changed significantly since 1999. However, dating violence remains an important public health issue as 10.3% of high school students have recently reported being a victim of physical dating violence. Nationwide, 12th grade students were more likely to report physical dating violence compared to 9th graders. Consistent with multiple research findings, females were more likely than males to experience physical dating violence. In Georgia however, there were no statistical differences between male and female victimization reports or between grade levels.

National efforts are being made to address teen dating violence and should also be reflected on state and local levels. Examining teen dating violence reports on solely a national level can mask varying prevalence in different states and overlook the disparities affecting individual geographical areas. This study found that Georgia, compared to most states, has high reports of physical dating violence. Additionally, Hispanic high school students in Georgia are more likely than their peers to experience physical dating violence. This outcome could have cultural implications as Hispanic youth make up a smaller portion of the studied population, but are experiencing a large rate of physical dating victimization.

These findings give insight into the magnitude of physical dating violence among Hispanic high schools students in Georgia and the need for TDV prevention programs that address ethnic pride, acculturation, family cohesion, and traditional gender roles within Latino communities [34]. However, these cultural factors and the extent of their influence need to be explicitly studied among Hispanic youth populations. For instance, some research studies

suggest that immigrant-status may not report violence due to fear of being deported. However, a study among Latino adolescents found that help-seeking was not influenced by acculturation or immigrant status [5]. There are additional ambiguities in the literature and findings regarding Hispanic cultural influences as risk and protective factors. Values such as family cohesion, respeto (respect), personalismo (formal friendliness), and ethnic pride are viewed as cultural strengths among Hispanic families and may serve as protective factors against dating violence victimization [5]. Research shows that low levels of family cohesion and higher levels of family and acculturation conflict are associated with risk for dating violence victimization. On the other end of the spectrum, upholding traditional Hispanic gender roles (i.e. machismo and marianismo) has been linked to increased risk for dating abuse victimization. These cultural values need to be measured among Hispanic youth involved in dating violence, as a perpetrator or victim, to fully understand the context and magnitude of these factors. Two interesting findings were revealed in the literature pertaining to higher reports and an increase of dating abuse victimization among Hispanic male teens. An analysis of YRBS trends found a small, statistically significant increase in physical dating violence among Hispanic male high school students from 1999 to 2011. The DAVILA study reported that young Hispanic males were more likely to report any dating violence, physical dating violence, sexual dating violence, and psychological dating violence than girls [5]. Inconsistent with most reports of females being more likely to experience dating violence victimization, these findings suggest a need for more research on TDV victimization among Hispanic male youth.

Direct local action is limited without local data on physical dating violence among youth. The findings from this study should prompt schools and local communities to monitor all forms of teen dating violence in local student health assessments or surveys. This study has also

revealed that culturally specific influences are important elements for public health professionals and policy makers to explore in efforts to reduce and prevent teen dating violence.

5.2 Limitations

There are several limitations of this study that must be considered. First, responses to YRBS questions are self-reported, which may result in underreporting or overreporting of physical dating violence victimization. Second, YRBS results may not be representative of all youth in this age group because participants only include those who attend school [32]. This excludes those who are home-schooled, not actively attending school, or imprisoned. In 2009, approximately 4% of persons nationwide, ages 16 to 17, were not enrolled in high school and had not completed high school [31]. These youth in particular may be most at risk for violence-related behavioral issues such as dating violence. In addition, exclusion of these groups may not assess the full magnitude of physical dating violence among teens. Third, 2013 YRBS state-level data are not available for all 50 states. Physical dating violence reports were not available for 9 states (Arizona, California, Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, and Pennsylvania). Also, Minnesota, Oregon, and Washington do not participate in the YRBSS. Some states that participate, do not achieve a high overall response rate to receive weighted results. If data from all states had been reported, Georgia may not have ranked as 3rd highest among physical dating violence prevalence.

Due to changes in the question and response options starting in 2013, long-term chronological trends are not available for the prevalence of physical dating violence [35]. For Georgia's physical dating violence reports, sample size was less than 100 for Hispanic males and females. This resulted in an inability to assess if Hispanic males were more or less likely than Hispanic females to experience physical dating violence in Georgia.

5.3 Implications

These findings suggest multiple areas of potential prevention and research for teen dating violence in Georgia. Based on the high prevalence of physical dating violence in Georgia, particularly among Hispanic youth, research is needed to better understand risk factors stemming from culturally-specific attributes. Among this population, more research is needed to assess the dating experiences of victimized Hispanic male youth, as some reports suggest this group is more likely to experience dating abuse. Prevention programs that have proven to be successful need to be evaluated among majority Hispanic populations to assess the effectiveness of such programs for short- and long-term outcomes in this specific ethnic group.

Based on findings that Hispanics and males in Georgia are more likely to experience physical dating violence compared to nationwide prevalence, gaps in community data regarding physical dating violence need to be filled. Recently, more attention has been given to dating violence experienced in adolescence as the focus of IPV data and research has generally been among adults. This study found that dating violence is prevalent among adolescents and teens, which warrants continuous research on trends, risk factors, and protective factors for this vulnerable population. Community assessments and local studies will provide more specific information on the magnitude of teen dating violence and how geographical or community-level influences affect TDV. The YRBS provides insightful representative data on physical data violence and should be extended to assess additional measures such as socioeconomic status and culturally driven risk behaviors.

In order to better assess why Georgia experiences high prevalence of teen dating violence, policy assessments and evaluations can determine if and how school, state, or national policies affect TDV incidents. Physical dating violence among teens is not inevitable and can be

prevented through education, awareness, and policies. Studies have shown that prevention curriculums alone are not sufficient to change behavior among victims or perpetrators of TDV. A combined effort is needed to address influences associated with TDV at all levels from individual to societal. Approximately 40% of males and females, who reported teen dating violence, stated the abuse occurred in school or on school property. Additionally, school and peer norms surrounding dating violence create social influences on youth's likelihood to be involved in TDV. The Georgia State Board of Education is required to develop a rape prevention program and program teen dating violence prevention program for students in grades 8- 12. However, there are no evaluations of this policy or data on where these programs have been implemented. National school policies and prevention programs regarding dating violence need to be standardized and not simply created, but also implemented. In addition to improving education and awareness among students, school districts should work together to ensure teachers and staff are trained to respond to dating violence and recognize when it occurs.

In efforts to address racial/ethnic disparities revealed in this study, prevention programs that target social and cultural factors need to be created for vulnerable subpopulations, specifically Hispanic youth. Prevention programs geared towards minorities cannot be implemented in schools or communities if they do not exist. As previously stated, TDV prevention programs should build on the cultural strengths of Hispanic youth by focusing on protective influences such as family connectedness and ethnic pride. Overall, there is more to learn about teen dating violence and how cultural factors play a role in victimization. There are multiple challenges that must be overcome to accomplish this. One of these barriers is teens' reluctance to report dating victimization due to fear, embarrassment, belief that violence is normal or unable to recognize abuse in a relationship. Prevention programs must first be created

and implemented to correct these barriers and misconceptions. Ultimately, a combination of prevention and intervention strategies and policies are needed to prevent and deter physical dating violence among youth.

5.4 Conclusion

The results of this study reveal that Georgia has the third highest prevalence of physical dating violence among high school students in the United States. These analyses also indicate that Hispanic youth in Georgia experience physical dating violence at significantly higher rates than their peers. Culturally-specific risk factors and influences need to be explored to further understand this growing disparity. In order to develop successful intervention and prevention strategies to reduce physical dating violence and address disparities, there needs to be a shift in policy, prevention, and research.

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TABLE 1. Sample sizes, response rates, and demographic characteristics— United States and Georgia, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2013

Site	Sample Size	School	Response Rate (%) Student	Overall	Sex (%)		Grade (%)				Race/Ethnicity (%)			
					Female	Male	9	10	11	12	White†	Black†	Hispanic†	Other‡
National Survey	13,583	77	88	68	50.0	50.0	27.3	25.7	23.8	23.1	55.6	14.3	21.1	8.9
Georgia Survey	1,992	70	87	61	49.5	50.5	29.8	26.3	22.0	21.4	46.1	37.6	9.8	6.4

† Non-Hispanic. ‡ American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and multiple race (non-Hispanic).

Table 2. Experienced physical dating violence, United States, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2013

Sex	Total	Race						
		AI/AN†	Asian‡	Black‡	Hispanic	NHOPI§	White‡	Multiple Race‡
Total	10.3 (9.2–11.4) 9,930	N/A 89	10.6 (5.3–20.1) 223	10.3 (8.5–12.4) 2,351	10.4 (9.0–12.0) 2,426	N/A 86	9.7 (8.2–11.5) 4,040	11.8 (8.4–16.3) 503
Female	13.0 (11.6–14.5) 4,876	N/A 46	8.1 (3.5–17.8) 123	12.3 (9.6–15.6) 1,163	13.6 (11.9–15.5) 1,190	N/A 35	12.9 (11.0–15.1) 1,981	15.4 (10.6–22.0) 263
Male	7.4 (6.4–8.6) 5,043	N/A 43	13.4 (6.0–27.3) 100	8.2 (6.6–10.3) 1,186	7.0 (5.3–9.1) 1,236	N/A 51	6.4 (4.9–8.2) 2,057	8.0 (4.3–14.3) 240

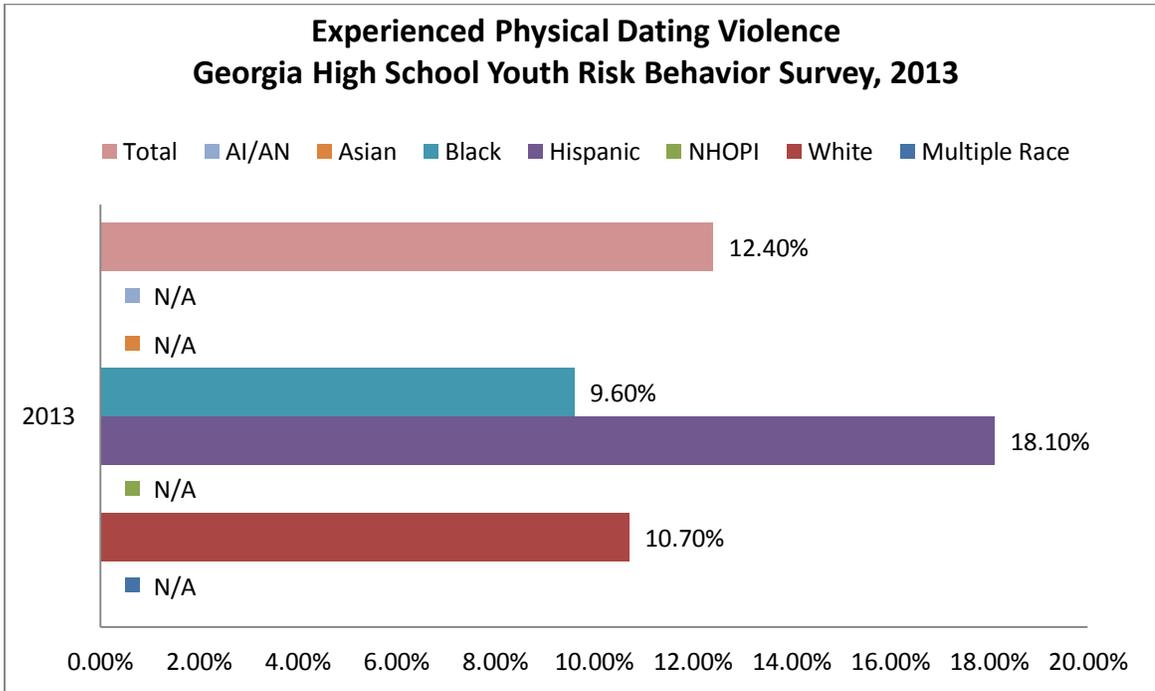
† Percentage, confidence interval, cell size, ‡ AI/AN = American Indian or Alaskan Native (non-Hispanic), N/A < 100 respondents for the subgroup, § Non-Hispanic, || NHOPI = Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic)

Table 3. Experienced Physical Dating Violence, Georgia, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2013

Race	Total	Sex	
		Female	Male
Total	12.4 (10.2–15.1) 1,316 [†]	12.9 (9.9–16.5) 669	11.6 (9.1–14.7) 635
American Indian or Alaska Native [‡]	N/A 13	N/A 8	N/A 5
Asian [§]	N/A 33	N/A 18	N/A 14
Black or African American [§]	9.6 (6.8–13.3) 443	10.6 (6.5–16.6) 240	8.4 (5.9–11.8) 203
Hispanic or Latino	18.1 (13.2–24.2) 167	N/A 89	N/A 72
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	N/A 9	N/A 4	N/A 5
White [§]	10.7 (8.3–13.8) 560	11.2 (7.3–16.8) 270	10.2 (7.2–14.4) 290
Multiple Race [§]	N/A 51	N/A 28	N/A 23

† Percentage, confidence interval, cell size, ‡ AI/AN = American Indian or Alaskan Native (non-Hispanic), N/A < 100 respondents for the subgroup, § Non-Hispanic, || NHOPI = Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic)

Figure 1.



N/A < 100 respondents for subgroups