




SPR 18th Annual Meeting

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Category/Theme: Etiology

Mental Health and Risk for Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration: Findings and Prevention Implications

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Mental Health and Risk for Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration: Findings and Prevention Implications

Intimate partner violence (IPV) is a serious public health problem affecting millions of people each year. National estimates indicate that each year women experience about 4.8 million intimate partner related physical assaults and rapes, while men are the victims of about 2.9 million intimate partner related physical assaults. The costs of IPV against women alone exceed an estimated \$8.3 billion (measured in 2003 dollars) per year, which include direct health care costs associated with IPV and productivity losses to victims. As recognition of IPV as a serious public health problem increases, more attention has been paid to risk and protective factors for IPV perpetration. Previous research has found a variety of individual, demographic, family and community factors (e.g., prior history of being maltreated during childhood, conduct problems or antisocial behaviors in childhood or adolescence, family poverty, low parental education, low social capital, and traditional sex role norms) that may contribute to the risk of IPV perpetration. One area that has produced mixed findings involves mental health as a risk factor for violence perpetration. While numerous studies have documented mental health effects of IPV victimization, previous research has produced mixed results about the link between mental illness and IPV perpetration. One of the key issues in this line of research involves the specificity of particular diagnostic categories and forms of violence. Recent work has documented links among PTSD symptoms, depression, and IPV, particularly among veteran populations (Rhodes et al., 2009; Teten, Sherman, & Han, 2009). Furthermore, when mental illness is combined with other risk factors such as substance abuse, the risk factors appear to interact and increase the risk of violence (Elbogen & Johnson, 2009). The proposed symposium will present several papers exploring specific links among mental health status and IPV perpetration. The papers will address different themes in untangling the associations between mental health and IPV. The first paper will address ADHD and conduct disorder in childhood as risk factors for IPV perpetration in young adulthood in a nationally representative sample. The second paper will examine alcohol and illicit drug abuse and mental health factors related to IPV perpetration. The third paper will present findings on PTSD symptoms and IPV perpetration among a sample of veterans. The findings will be discussed and examined in the context of implications for effective prevention approaches for IPV.

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