



Intimate Partner Violence and Partner-Specific Sexual Risk Behaviors Among Young Adult Family Planning Clinic Patients: A Retrospective Chart Review

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Background

- Previous research has linked partner violence to sexually transmitted infection (STI) risk among women (Pulerwitz et al., 2002; Raj et al., 2004; Crosby et al., 2008).
- Partner-specific risk behaviors (non-monogamy, multiple other partners, and forced sex) may be important in understanding this relationship.

Purpose

- To describe the association between partner-specific and personal STI risk behaviors among women who have experienced partner violence.

Sample

Final sample: 2,000 women

Inclusion criteria:

1. Female
2. Reproductive age (menarche through menopause)
3. Seeking reproductive services
4. Clinic visit between 2006-2011

IRB approval was granted for the study.

Methods

A retrospective review of medical records was conducted at four family planning clinics in the northeastern United States.

➤ Every 3rd chart from the alphabetic filing system was reviewed

➤ Violence variables were assessed by questions in the medical record:

1. “Have you ever been abused/felt unsafe in a relationship (physical/emotional/sexual) threats or violence?”
2. “Have you ever been forced to have sex when you didn’t want to?”

➤ Personal risk variables included unprotected sex, anal sex

➤ Partner-specific risk variables included a partner with multiple partners, partner at risk for STI

Data Analysis

Logistic regression analysis (SPSS 19.0) used to examine associations between partner violence and sexual risk behaviors.

Results

Table 1. Sample characteristics

Characteristic	N	%
Age (reported from 2000)		
< 18 years old	524	26.2
18-24 years	996	49.8
25-29 years	244	12.2
> 30 years	236	11.8
Race		
Black/African American	114	5.7
Caucasian	1297	64.9
Don't know/Refused	462	23.1
Ethnicity		
Non-Hispanic/Latino	1261	63.1
Hispanic/Latino	599	30.0
Marital Status		
Single	1753	87.7
Married	108	5.4

- 10.2% (n = 203) reported partner violence in the past year
- 28.5% (n = 570) reported a history of violence

Table 2. Percentage of women reporting sexual risk behaviors and odds ratios

	All	Those reporting violence	Those reporting no violence	Odds ratio
Personal				
Unprotected sex (vaginal or anal)	75.9	93.1	73.9	5.2 (2.9-9.1)
Anal sex	11.5	25.1	9.8	1.1 (2.1-4.3)
Partner				
Multiple partners	39	79.7	34.4	7.7 (5.4-11.2)
At risk for STI	35.9	79.8	30.8	9.2 (6.4-13.2)

*Controlling for age, race/ethnicity, marital status

Women experiencing past year intimate partner violence were more likely than women with no violence to report:

1. Personal sexual risk factors i.e. “had sex without condoms,” “anal sex”
2. Partner-specific sexual risk factors i.e. “partner at risk for STDs,” “partner with multiple partners”

Conclusions

- Partner violence was common among this sample of women utilizing family planning clinics
- These findings add to the current knowledge about the association between partner violence and sexual risk behaviors
- The results provide further support the association between partner violence and STI risk in women

Implications

- STI services need to include assessment of partner-specific sexual risks.
- Identifying factors that influence a woman’s ability to protect herself will enhance the success of STI treatment and prevention programs.

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