



New York City High School Students Victimized at Rate Higher than National Average

According to the results of a three-year, comprehensive research project on sexual and dating violence among New York City high school students by the New York City Alliance Against Sexual Assault and the Mailman School of Public Health's Center for Youth Violence Prevention, New York teens are victims of sexual violence at a higher rate than the national average. One in six participants (16.2 percent) reported having experienced sexual violence at some point in their lives, compared to the national average of between seven and ten percent of 12-17-year-olds who reported having experienced some form of sexual assault.

Among the other study findings:

- 89 percent of those who have experienced sexual violence knew the person who perpetrated the victimization;
- Almost 10 percent of students who reported having a dating partner in the last year said that their partner touched them sexually when they didn't want to be touched and 6.7 percent said they were forced to have sex against their will;
- 60 percent of youth who were physically violent with their dating partners also reported having engaged in other physical fights in the last year;
- Less than half (41.3 percent) of the students who self-identified as having experienced physical or sexual dating violence told someone about those experiences;
- New York City high school students are most likely to tell their friends about sexual or dating violence; 71.8 percent told friends first; only 12.8 percent first told a parent about the violence; 11.5 percent first told another adult;
- Victims of physical dating violence also reported poorer health status (28 percent) and lower self-esteem (25 percent) than youth who have not experienced physical dating violence (21 percent and 18 percent respectively).

Leslie Davidson, MD, professor of clinical Epidemiology and a lead researcher on the study, said, "We know the long term adverse consequences on physical and emotional ill health from partner violence among youth. It is essential that New York City address this problem with a multi-faceted strategy."

"These data highlight the need for early identification, and treatment as well as prevention," said Vaughn Rickert, PhD, professor of clinical Population and Family Health. "Unfortunately, funding for relationship violence among youth is not a priority. Funds need to be made available at the city, state, and federal levels in order to promote sound intervention and prevention strategies for youth."

The schools whose students took part in the study included three in Manhattan and one in Brooklyn. In all, 1,454 high school students ranging in age from 13-21 participated in the study, the majority of whom were 15 or 16 years old.

For a copy of the research summary, [click here](#). A copy of the full study, "Partners and Peers: Sexual and Dating Violence Among NYC Youth," will be released in July.