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Prevention of Physical and Sexual Dating Violence among Adolescents: A Meta-analysis

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There is limited evidence on the capacity of prevention programs to reduce dating violence among adolescents. The aim of this study was to conduct a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized trials to assess the efficacy of interventions for physical and sexual teen dating violence (TDV).

We searched databases from inception through April 2021. Included studies had a randomized design examining the efficacy of a program to reduce sexual or physical TDV. The odds ratio (OR) was calculated as an estimate of effect size.

Eighteen trials (22781 adolescents) were included. Interventions were effective in reducing physical dating violence perpetration (OR=0.74; 95% CI, 0.59-0.92) and victimization (OR=0.78; 95% CI, 0.64-0.95). For sexual violence, the effect was not statistically significant. Trials targeting at-risk youth, older adolescents and trials involving parents reported significantly larger effect sizes. Outcomes were not associated with length or intensity of the programs.

Findings suggest that prevention programs may be effective in reducing physical TDV, but there is unclear evidence of the impact on sexual violence outcomes.

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