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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Variation in Exposure to Violence in Early Adolescence Distinguishes between Intimate Partner Violence Victimization and Perpetration among Young Men Involved in the Justice System

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Abstract

Early exposure to violence (ETV) has been repeatedly linked to violence in intimate relationships later in life. However, this association has rarely been explored among young men involved in the justice system, a group that is of significant policy concern. **Methods.** Drawing from four waves of data collected from 808 young men with histories of serious offending, this study examined rates of physical and emotional intimate partner violence (IPV) victimization and perpetration. Next, the rates of IPV victimization-perpetration overlap were examined. Lastly, the associations between IPV in young adulthood and ETV in early adolescence were explored using standard difference-in-means tests. Findings show that victimization and perpetration of emotional IPV are common experiences among the men. Seventy-three percent of the sample report emotional IPV victimization and 70% report emotional IPV perpetration. Physical IPV is less common than emotional IPV with 44% of young men reporting being victims of physical IPV and 29% reporting perpetration of physical IPV. Strong linkages were observed between IPV victimization and IPV perpetration. Lastly, associations exist between exposure to violence as a witness or a victim and both emotional and physical IPV victimization and perpetration. IPV involvement as a victim and/or perpetrator is more common than not among young men involved in the justice system. Both emotional and physical forms of IPV are associated with witnessing and experiencing violence during adolescence. Intervention during adolescence is critical to avoid IPV during young adulthood.

Keywords Intimate partner violence · Domestic violence · Exposure to violence · Victim-offender overlap · Cycle of violence

Introduction

The socialization that children experience in the first decade and a half of their lives plays an integral part in helping to set them up to succeed or fail in various domains over the life course. Research shows that children who are socialized well, experience supportive familial, educational, and neighborhood environments, and develop effective self-control will have educational, employment, interpersonal, and prosocial success into and throughout adulthood (Caspi et al. 2016; Piquero et al. 2010; Piquero et al. 2016). On the other hand, distressed and disadvantaged familial and neighborhood environments, especially those that are mired by conflict, aggression, and violence, have adverse effects on children's socialization and behavior, such as developing aggressive attitudes, potential drug and alcohol abuse as well as involvement in offending and victimization (Haynie et al. 2009; Moffitt and the Klaus-Grawe Think Tank 2013).

Within this area of research however, less attention has been paid to examining how variability in exposure to

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violence (ETV) early in life may be related to specific forms of violence, including intimate partner violence (IPV) in early adulthood (e.g., Jennings et al. 2017). Some evidence using data from a large health maintenance organization points toward a gradient relationship: as the number of adverse childhood experiences increases so too does the risk of IPV (Reid 2018). Still, studies have not investigated this relationship among high-risk populations who experience a greater frequency of ETV in relation to the general population, such as serious youthful offenders. Youth involved in the justice system categorized as serious offenders are an especially pertinent policy-relevant group given their risk of lifetime offending and their exorbitant financial costs to victims and society more generally (Cohen and Piquero 2009; Shulman et al. 2013; Sweeten et al. 2013). This group also experiences disproportionately higher rates of ETV, with some studies indicating a rate of 2–3 times higher than that of the general population (Baglivio et al. 2014).

This study sought to address this gap by examining the impact of ETV on the likelihood of IPV perpetration and/or victimization among serious youthful offenders. Accordingly, this study uses data from the Pathways to Desistance Study, a seven-year longitudinal study of over 1300 serious adolescent offenders in Philadelphia and Phoenix followed from mid-adolescence into early-adulthood, to explore these relationships. Specifically, we aim to answer questions about the impact of ETV on the likelihood of IPV perpetration and victimization among this population, as well as whether there is an association between ETV during adolescence and later victimization and/or perpetration of IPV.

Exposure to Violence

Exposure to Violence encompasses traumatic or adverse events that occur in a variety of settings such as conventional crime victimization, child maltreatment, abuse by partners, peers and siblings, sexual victimization, witnessing and indirect victimization (including exposure to community violence, family violence, and school violence and threats), and cybervictimization (Finkelhor et al. 2015). ETV at home, in school, or in the community profoundly affects psychological and social wellbeing and seriously impacts the developing brain and biological stress response system (Teicher et al. 2016). Studies show that children and adolescents who experience ETV tend to perceive and respond to their environment differently from those without such a history (Heide and Solomon 2006; Putnam 2006), such as having decreased expectations of being safe at home, at school or in the community and reduced beliefs about their capability to self-protect (Gobin and Freyd 2009). Children and youth exposed to violence also have an increased risk of developing aggressive attitudes, engaging in drug and alcohol abuse, or committing suicide and violence (Reid 2018). The long-term, detrimental effects of ETV during childhood and adolescence have been substantiated by large bodies of research from various fields (e.g., Perepletchikova and Kaufman 2010; Piquero et al. 2006; Putnam 2006; Reid and Loughran 2019a). Specific to this study, Farrell and Zimmerman (2017) found that contemporaneous and acute ETV was significantly related to long-term future violent offending.

One of the more insidious characteristics of ETV is its propensity to cluster and recur, therefore children with histories of ETV have an increased risk for experiencing multiple types of victimization over time (Farrell et al. 2005; Reid and Sullivan 2009). Researchers have repeatedly found that it is more common than not for victimized youth to endure multiple victimizations, either repeated occurrences of the same type of victimization or to be exposed to numerous forms of violence (Finkelhor et al. 2013). Most notably, research has shown that some subsets of youth are exposed to high levels of violence in the home and community, and this is magnified for youth in distressed communities as well as among juvenile offenders who have experience in the criminal justice system. Baglivio et al. (2014) found that rates of ETV among adolescents involved in the justice system were two to three times higher than that of the general population. Research also shows that youth involved in the justice system report high levels of child maltreatment (Dierkhising et al. 2013) and youth detained in juvenile detention witness or experience peer violence on an almost daily basis (Dierkhising et al. 2014). Therefore, male youth involved in the justice system are a vulnerable population that experience disproportionately high rates of ETV.

The majority of research regarding ETV has investigated the causes and consequences of various forms of ETV in isolation (i.e., family violence, school violence, community violence). Despite the tendency to empirically investigate different types of ETV, links between various forms of ETV have been repeatedly documented such as those between: child maltreatment and intimate partner violence; community violence and child maltreatment; intimate partner violence and community violence; child maltreatment and sexual assault; and child physical abuse and dating violence (e.g., Fang and Corso 2007; Givens and Reid 2018; López-Quílez et al. 2015; Reid and Sullivan 2009). However, less research has explored the impact of ETV on subsequent juvenile offending and victimization, especially related to specific forms of violence, including intimate partner violence (IPV) in early adulthood (e.g., Jennings et al. 2017). The lack of research is particularly disadvantageous because ETV has a myriad of adverse consequences that permeate over the life-course including interpersonal relationship difficulties (Cochran et al. 2017) and extensive involvement in the criminal justice system (e.g., Fox et al. 2015; Nesi et al. 2020; Reid and Loughran 2019a, 2019b).

Intimate Partner Violence

The domestic violence literature is expansive, crosses multiple disciplines and contains several debates, but over the last 20 years the research has begun to indicate several consistent findings that are important to highlight for this study. First, studies indicate that men and women self-report domestic violence perpetration at similar rates and approximately 50% of relationship violence is bidirectional, but the use of severe forms of violence and increased injury is more common in male-to-female violence (Chan 2011). Studies have also found bidirectionality across general population young adults (Renner and Whitney 2010) However, the types of violence men and women use and experience may differ (Wagers 2019). Second, domestic violence is a heterogenous phenomenon with multiple types occurring, which has contributed to the disparate findings in the literature (Johnson 2008). Third, IPV is not homogenous but is heterogenous (Johnson and Leone 2005), and IPV perpetrators are heterogenous, varying in characteristics and motives (Capaldi and Kim 2007). In addition, many of these offenders are also violent outside the home (Cavanough & Gelles, 2005).

Recognizing IPV perpetrators are not a homogenous group, a body of research has sought to create typologies that reflect the varied characteristics of individual offenders. This research has predominately focused on male offenders and has followed the typologies set forth by Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart 1994; Holtzworth-Munroe and Meehan 2004) that examined three dimensions: severity of the violence, generality of the violence (only in the home or both in and out of the home), and psychopathology or personality disorder (e.g., Theobald et al. 2016). Holtzworth-Munroe and Meehan (2004) proposed three types of male IPV offenders: family only, dysphoric or borderline, and generally violent or antisocial. These typologies are supported by other research indicating that male IPV offenders are heterogenous and tend to fall into different categories (Anderson and Anderson 2008; Cavanaugh and Gelles 2005; Thijssen and Ruiter 2011). Specifically, some men target only their female partner and are not violent outside the home, while other men are violent both in and outside the home (Holtzworth-Munroe and Meehan 2004). Some of the men have an attitude of hostility toward women and target only females while others do not have this characteristic. However, this research has identified that many of the men who are violent both in and outside the family have exposure to violence in their childhood, associate with deviant peers, have more substance abuse problems and generally engage in antisocial behavior (Anderson and Anderson 2008). Most of this research to date has focused on adult male IPV offenders and little to no studies have examined the relationship between the risk-factor of childhood ETV and IPV perpetration or victimization in young males.

Exposure to Violence and IPV Perpetration and Victimization

To date the IPV research examining the relationship between early life ETV and future IPV focuses on the connection between witnessing parental violence in the home in childhood and IPV in adulthood. For example, this body of research shows that witnessing IPV and ETV in general (community, school, child maltreatment) early in life increases an individual's risk of both IPV victimization and perpetration later in life (Gover et al. 2008). For example, using an urban college student population, Forke et al. (2018) found that one in four of their participants reported witnessing adult violence at home as a child with 44% reporting experiencing relationship violence as either a victim, perpetrator, or both. Ehrensaft et al. (2003) found that exposure to parental violence was the second strongest (conduct disorder was first) predictor of violence toward an intimate partner later in life. Some studies suggest that witnessing violence may affect males and females differently (Gover et al. 2008) and the gender of the child may be a key determinate in the relationship between the type of adult violence witnessed (male perpetrated, female perpetrated or bidirectional) and future experiences with IPV victimization and perpetration (Forke et al. 2018). Social learning theory is one theoretical model that has been used to explain this relationship, but this research indicates it only predicts IPV in about 25%–30% of the cases. Meaning only about 25% of those who witness interparental violence in childhood grow up and perpetrate IPV as an adult (Cochran et al. 2017).

The body of research examining the relationship between witnessing violence and later IPV has several limitations. It typically does not account or control for other confounding social and contextual factors commonly associated with witnessing parental violence and later IPV. For example, research indicates that interparental violence is more common in family contexts with multiple dysfunctional features such as parental criminality, drug and alcohol abuse, and poverty (Fritz et al. 2012). These familial risk factors are also common among serious youthful offenders. Another limitation is this research does not typically control for childhood abuse and neglect, which are commonly present in homes with interparental violence and have been shown to also contribute to the increased risk for future IPV perpetration and victimization. A third limitation is that most studies follow traditional IPV research exploring for males the likelihood of future IPV perpetration when witnessing parental violence and rarely exploring their adult victimization. Lastly, research within the IPV literature has not expanded to include ETV outside of the family of origin or included knowledge gained from the general ETV and trauma literature previously discussed.

These limitations highlight important gaps in the IPV literature, specifically that more research on understanding the connections between early ETV and future IPV is needed,

especially for high risk males. Male youth are equally exposed to IPV in the home as female youth, where 1 in 5 male youth report early life child abuse in the home, and male youth experience violence outside the home (community and/or school violence) by unrelated individuals at a higher rate than female youth (Aisenberg and Herrenkohl 2008). Studies have shown that male-to-male violence and male-to-female IPV share similar risk factors, such as growing up in a violent homes, substance abuse, social isolation, gendered disposition for aggressive behavior, poor behavior controls, and low sense of self-worth (Ambramsky et al. 2011). The limited research on adult IPV offenders demonstrates that most of these offenders experienced chronic childhood ETV not only in the home but outside the home (Moffitt et al. 2000; Sonkin and Dutton 2003). However, little to no research has examined the relationship between childhood ETV to future IPV perpetration and/or IPV victimization in males and no studies have specifically examined this among serious youthful offenders. Studying the relationship between early life exposure to violence and early adult domestic violence victimization and perpetration among a high-risk male population could offer important insights to possible treatment options for these youthful offenders and a path to break the cycle.

Current Study

Considering the gaps in the literature and need to inform treatment strategies to prevent IPV victimization and IPV perpetration, the purpose of this study was to explore patterns of IPV perpetration and victimization in a sample of male youth involved in the justice system – a population that experiences disproportionately high rates of ETV and is at elevated risk for IPV victimization and IPV perpetration. Therefore we sought to address the following research questions: 1) What impact does ETV have on the likelihood of IPV perpetration among serious youth offenders?; 2) What impact does ETV have on the likelihood of IPV victimization among serious youth offenders?; 3) Is there an association between experiencing and witnessing violence during adolescence and later involvement in IPV as a victim or perpetrator?

First, drawing from four waves of data, we examined the rates of IPV victimization and IPV perpetration among young men involved in the justice system. Based on prior research and the composition of our study sample, we expected high rates of IPV victimization and IPV perpetration to emerge from the data. Next, we expected to find substantial overlap between IPV victimization and IPV perpetration. Lastly, we examined the associations of ETV during adolescence (witnessing violence, experiencing violence) and IPV victimization and IPV perpetration in young adulthood. We expected to find associations between ETV and IPV victimization and IPV perpetration.

Methodology

Study Sample and Procedures

The study utilized data from the baseline assessment and four follow-up assessments collected between 2000 and 2012 from 1170 male participants involved in a prospective, longitudinal study called the Pathways to Desistance Study (Mulvey 2012). All study participants had been found guilty of a serious offense in U.S. juvenile or adult court in Philadelphia County, PA (Philadelphia) or Maricopa County, AZ (Phoenix). Additional information regarding youth recruitment, supplementary descriptions of the total sample, and detailed explanations of data collection procedures are available elsewhere (Mulvey et al. 2004; Schubert et al. 2004). These data are available to individual investigators through the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR) (Mulvey 2012). All data has been de-identified and cannot be linked to particular individuals. Additionally, this study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of South Florida.

To arrive at our final analytic sample, we made several restriction criteria on the full sample. First, we restricted our analysis to only total $N = 1170$ males in the full sample. Of the males, we further excluded 362 individuals who were missing 3 or more timepoints from the 7th through 10th wave, and thus offered little information to the analysis. This reduced the final analytic sample to 808 males for who we observed longitudinal patterns of IPV victimization and perpetration. The ages of participants at baseline for the study subsample ranged from 14 to 18 years ($M = 16.02$, $SD = 1.17$) at baseline and from 18 to 22 years at the 7th wave. The study subsample was comprised of more African American (41.0%) than Caucasian American (19.8%) participants. Of the participants, 34.5% were Hispanic (regardless of race) and 4.7% reported their race/ethnicity as Asian, Native American, or other.

Measures

Intimate Partner Violence Involvement in intimate partner violence (IPV) was measured using the Domestic Violence Inventory designed for the Pathways to Desistance Study. Items were adapted from prior studies that measured intimate partner violence in a variety of samples and contexts (Moffitt et al. 1997; Moffitt et al. 2000; Straus et al. 1995). This inventory was designed to measure four dimensions of IPV victimization and IPV perpetration which occurred during the past year involving the study participant and any intimate partner (e.g., girlfriend, ex-girlfriend, spouse, ex-spouse, partner, ex-partner). The four dimensions of IPV included in this measure were: 1) physical violence (e.g., "Has your partner grabbed, pushed, or shoved you?"), 2) psychological aggression (e.g., "Have you called your partner stupid, fat or ugly?"), 3) controlling behavior (e.g., "Has your partner restricted your use of

the car or telephone?"), and 4) injury (e.g., "Have you ever passed out from being hit by your partner?"). We also include items on sexual coercion (e.g., "Have you used physical force your partner to have sex with you?") as distinguished from physical violence.

Participants were assessed using the Domestic Violence Inventory during the last four waves of data collection of the Pathways to Desistance Study. For each wave, participants were categorized as IPV victim (0 = no; 1 = yes) if they endorsed one or more items indicating IPV victimization (e.g., "Has your partner threatened you with a knife or gun?", "Has your partner ever shot at or stabbed you?"). Additionally, for each wave participants were categorized as IPV perpetrator (0 = no; 1 = yes) if they endorsed one or more items indicating IPV perpetration (e.g., "Have you threatened your partner with a knife or gun?", "Have you ever shot at or stabbed your partner?"). Participants were further categorized based on whether they reported items related to IPV physical victimization, IPV emotional victimization, IPV sexual victimization, IPV physical perpetration, IPV emotional perpetration, and IPV sexual perpetration. Finally, we created six binary measures that reflect if during the full observation period, and individual reported a) any IPV physical victimization, b) any IPV emotional victimization, c) any IPV sexual victimization, d) any IPV physical perpetration, e) any IPV emotional perpetration, and f) any IPV sexual perpetration.

Exposure to Violence Exposure to violence (ETV) was primarily measured using a modified version of the Exposure to Violence (ETV) Inventory (Selner-O'Hagan et al. 1998). The ETV measure consists of two subscales. One subscale included six items documenting experienced violence (e.g., "Have you ever been chased where you thought you might be seriously hurt?"). The second subscale contained seven items documenting witnessed or observed violence (e.g., "Have you ever seen someone else being raped, an attempt made to rape someone or any other type of sexual attack?").

Analysis

First, we considered rates of both IPV perpetration and IPV victimization reported during young adulthood. We then considered the joint distribution of IPV perpetration and IPV victimization to study overlap in the outcomes. Finally, we examined the associations between ETV reported at baseline and IPV victimization and IPV perpetration reported during adulthood. All analyses were conducted in STATA 16 (StataCorp 2019).

Results

When considering all forms of IPV, only 16.3% reported no IPV victimization and 9.3% reported no IPV perpetration of any type during the four waves of data collection included in this study. The IPV rates by type are reported in Table 1. First, 44.4% of the sample reported physical IPV victimization and 72.9% reported emotional IPV victimization. Similarly, 28.5% and 70.3% of the sample reported physical IPV and emotional IPV perpetration, respectively. Conversely, only 1.7% of the sample reported sexual IPV victimization while less than 1% reported sexual IPV perpetration. As such, given the low rates for either of these last two outcomes, we refrained from using them in subsequent analyses.

Additional results are presented in Table 1. First, the relatively higher rates of emotional IPV victimization/perpetration compared to the comparatively lower rates of physical IPV victimization/perpetration suggest the importance of disaggregating these two measures. Second, we also considered the conditional probabilities of both IPV victimization conditional on IPV perpetration and vice versa. These marginal probabilities are also reported in Table 1. The probability of physical IPV victimization conditional on IPV perpetration is 93.0%, compared to 25.1% for those who report no physical IPV perpetration. Related, the probability of physical IPV perpetration is very low (3.6%) given no reported IPV victimization. This rate increases to 59.6% conditional on reported physical IPV victimization. This suggests that these two outcomes are highly dependent. Similarly, we considered the marginal probabilities of emotional IPV victimization and perpetration. The probability of emotional IPV victimization given IPV perpetration is 95.8%, compared to only 18.8% for those who report no emotional IPV victimization. Similarly, the probability or reporting emotional IPV perpetration is 92.4% for those who report emotional IPV victimization, compared to only 11.0% for those who report no emotional IPV victimization. These results suggest that the linkage between emotional IPV victimization-perpetration is perhaps even stronger than the linkage between physical IPV victimization-perpetration.

Table 2 reports the relationships between the baseline ETV variables conditional on both IPV victimization and IPV perpetration groups. Specifically, Table 2 reports findings on the impact of ETV on the likelihood of IPV victimization and perpetration among serious young offenders, and explains the relationships between experiencing and witnessing violence during adolescence and later involvement in IPV victimization or perpetration. For both types of IPV victimization and IPV perpetration, subgroups that reported involvement averaged significantly higher levels of experienced and witnessed violence during adolescence.

Discussion

Although substantial bodies of research exist regarding violence exposure during childhood/adolescence and IPV, most

Table 1 Rates of IPV Victimization and Perpetration by Type ($N = 808$)

	Rate	Physical IPV Perpetration		Emotional IPV Perpetration	
		No	Yes	No	Yes
Physical IPV Victimization	0.444	0.251	0.930		
Emotional IPV Victimization	0.729			0.188	0.958
Sexual IPV Victimization	0.017				
		Physical IPV Victimization		Emotional IPV Victimization	
		No	Yes	No	Yes
Physical IPV Perpetration	0.285	0.036	0.596		
Emotional IPV Perpetration	0.703			0.110	0.924
Sexual IPV Perpetration	0.005				

studies have not examined the relationship between the two. Historically in the IPV literature, males are viewed as the offenders and their early childhood ETV has not typically been incorporated into research studies. Currently, the discourse in the IPV literature and research has been changing acknowledging that the etiology of IPV is intrinsically more complex than originally theorized, with a multitude of risk factors both external to and intrinsic to the individual. However, there are still little to no empirical research that incorporates the knowledge gained from the ETV research specifically to IPV among high risk young males. The purpose of the current study was to help address this gap in our understanding of IPV victimization and IPV perpetration among a highly vulnerable population –young adult males involved in the justice system.

Table 2 Associations between Adolescent Exposure to Violence and Young Adult Intimate Partner (N = 808)

	ETV – Victim *M*(*SD*)	ETV – Witness *M*(*SD*)
Physical IPV Victimization		
Yes	1.74 (1.49)	4.07 (1.87)
No	1.52 (1.42)	3. 58 (1.93)
t	2.10*	3.63***
Emotional IPV Victimization		
Yes	1.70 (1.47)	3.93 (1.87)
No	1.43 (1.44)	3.45 (2.03)
t	2.26*	3.19**
Physical IPV Perpetration		
Yes	1.80 (1.45)	4.24 (1.93)
No	1.55 (1.47)	3.62 (1.83)
t	2.19*	4.23***
Emotional IPV Perpetration		
Yes	1.70 (1.45)	3.94 (1.85)
No	1.43 (1.70)	3.46 (2.04)
t	2.38*	3.31***

Note: ETV – Exposure to Violence; IPV – Intimate Partner Violence, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

In terms of our research questions, we found substantial overlap between IPV victimization and perpetration for both emotional and physical IPV. This finding could indicate that young men are rarely passive recipients of violence but rather they are likely to respond to IPV perpetration by their partner by perpetrating IPV against their partner. From a theoretical perspective, this could be explained through social learning theory and the larger role of modeling behavior where children learn primarily from parents the acceptable forms of behavior (Cochran et al. 2017). Given this group of males involved in the justice system reported high level of ETV in childhood it is possible they have learned to respond to verbal and physical attacks with the same type of behavior. Conversely, these findings could indicate that partners of young men perpetrating IPV are very likely to perpetrate IPV in response to perceiving violence being perpetrated towards them. For example, Johnson (2008) proposed that multiple types of IPV occurs among couples. One type he referred to as resistive violence, which is done in response a perceived attack during conflict. Others explain the clustering of ETV by suggesting certain children and adolescents are in a high risk category for victimization with victimization developing into a chronic condition possibly stemming from the detrimental social, psychological, and neurological impacts of early ETV (Farrell et al. 2005; Finkelhor et al. 2007; Reid and Sullivan 2009). The trauma research supports these concepts of responsive violence but from a slightly different view (see Reid and Loughran 2019b). This body of research has demonstrated that individuals who are chronically exposed to emotional and physical violence develop a sense of ongoing hypervigilance and generally have difficulty modulating their emotions resulting in aggression against self and others (Reid and Loughran 2019b; van der Kolk 2014). In this state, it is much more likely an individual will view they are under an attack, and then respond from their fight or flight instincts (van der Kolk 2014), which may be violence especially if this is what has been demonstrated to them in their home and/or community as a means to resolve conflict. Lastly, this finding is in line with the body of literature that examines the general

victim/offender overlap (see Jennings et al. 2012). Support for this overlap has been found across different populations, including between races, cross-culturally, and among those with mental health issues. Research has found that involvement in risky, unstructured, or unsupervised activities is a significant correlate of the victim-offender overlap. In the context of intimate partner violence, simply spending time at home could be a "risky" activity that might explain the overlap found in the current study.

Next, we found associations between experiencing and witnessing violence during adolescence and later involvement in IPV as a victim and/or perpetrator. This finding adds to our understanding of the risks of IPV. The ETV instrument measured community-based or peer-based violence, not family or intimate partner violence, suggesting that the cycle of violence is not specialized. Experiencing or witnessing certain types of violence does not only create a risk for further victimization or perpetration of that same type of violence but may have a more generalized impact on the likelihood of continued violence. Recognizing these connections across the different types of violence that occur across the lifespan fits the current dialogue in the IPV literature which is showing broad agreement among IPV researchers and advocates that while there are a multitude of risk factors for IPV external to the individual (social, structural, community violence, family norms, economic etc.), factors internal to the individual and/or shared in the couple (e.g., trauma histories, genetic vulnerabilities, cognitive processing styles, characteristic emotional/behavioral reactions to particular social contexts) are important correlates, if not determinates of IPV victimization and perpetration (Eckhardt and Massa 2020).

Implications and Limitations of the Study

Historically IPV was framed within the context of the larger socio-political culture of patriarchy as the use of men's violence against women (Dobash and Dobash 1979; Pence and Paymar 1993), resulting in ETV victimization among male IPV perpetrators traditionally being dismissed within this literature. However, current research indicates that male perpetrators of IPV often have histories of a multitude of ETV and that youth involved in the justice system have higher rates of childhood ETV than the general population. A focal point of this study was to explore the relationship between childhood ETV and IPV perpetration and victimization among youth involved in the justice system who represent a high-risk group for adult IPV perpetration. Prior studies of IPV among young adults in general populations show that bidirectionality is more common than unidirectionality and that IPV is present in about 39% of youth ages 12–21 who are dating. (Renner and Whitney 2010; Whitaker et al. 2007). Based upon the ETV research we anticipated that a population of youth involved in the justice system would experience higher rates of IPV victimization and report higher rates of IPV perpetration. Our findings support this as we found that relatively small percentages of young adult males in our sample had no involvement in IPV victimization or IPV perpetration (16.3% and 9.3% respectively). This finding emphasizes the need for effective IPV prevention and intervention programs specialized for young adult males involved in the justice system. For example, policy-makers might want to consider implementing programs that are grounded in a restorative justice (RJ) framework. The premise behind RJ programs is that crime is a violation of people and relationships, rather than merely a violation of the law (Zehr 1990). This is especially the case with respect to intimate partner violence. Research has demonstrated support for the effectiveness of RJ programs in various types of implementation, as well as among juvenile offending populations, and when applied to intimate partner violence (Bergseth and Bouffard 2013; Bouffard et al. 2017; Gaarder 2015).

From the study findings, we can surmise that mutual or bidirectional partner violence is not a rare occurrence but occurs frequently in the intimate relationships of young men involved in the justice system. Compared to studies among general population youth, the rate of mutual IPV is high among this sample of young men involved in the justice system. Studies have shown that adolescents who experience IPV victimization and/or IPV perpetration at young ages in their dating relationships are more likely to continue being victimized or perpetrate IPV into young adulthood (Cui et al. 2013). As male adolescents age, they are viewed as adults and the focus often turns from treatment to punishment. Therefore, these findings highlight the critical need for prevention and intervention strategies designed for male adolescents involved in the justice system. Absent intervention, young adolescents involved in the justice system are at heightened risk to perpetrate violence against and be victimized by an intimate partner into early adulthood and possibly beyond. The costs to victims and society more generally from this pattern of behavior is high but should not be tolerated. Continued research in this area of research will hopefully provide insight to better inform policy and practice in dealing with violence more generally.

Although our work explores previously unexamined issues, we are mindful of some of the potential limitations. For example, although our use of a sample of youth with involvement in the criminal justice system adds to our understanding of IPV in an vulnerable population from two regions of the United States. Future studies are needed to examine the extent to which our results would replicate in other cities and across race/ethnicity. Second, our sample was drawn in the early part of the twenty-first century and therefore may be viewed by some as dated. However, as Laub and Sampson (2003) correctly note, to study longitudinal questions, it is necessary to collect data with many long-term follow-ups, at which point it will be viewed as "too old". Nevertheless, we believe future research should seek to replicate this study with more current and future samples. Third, although our measures surrounding intimate partner

violence and exposure to violence are in line with those used in the social science literature, it is worthy to explore a wider range of each types of behaviors. Lastly, it would be good to continue to track the longitudinal association with this sample (or older-age individuals) in order to assess how violence manifests into and throughout adulthood, especially as relationships develop.

In conclusion, the findings of this study leave little doubt that IPV perpetration and IPV victimization are a common experience of male adolescents involved in the justice system transitioning into young adulthood. Further studies into the relationship between early life ETV and early adult IPV victimization and perpetration among a high-risk male population can offer needed insights to possible treatment options for these youthful offenders and a path to break the cycle of violence. The planning of effective interventions requires better understanding of the common patterns of IPV victimization/perpetration and the risk factors common to victims and perpetrators. For example, early childhood intervention programs, such as the Nurse Home Partnership, can recognize violence in the home and help to discourage or prevent it. Given that prior research has demonstrated ETV leads to violence both in and outside the family (Anderson and Anderson 2008), this in turn might prevent aggression and violence in general from persisting into adolescence and adulthood. Moreover, when IPV offending is committed by adults who were victimized as youth, effective interventions such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) can recognize the root causes of many of the problems. CBT is based on the idea that cognitive distortions and behaviors are learned and can therefore be changed. Trauma-Focused CBT (TF-CBT) is a form of CBT treatment that has been specifically adapted for trauma treatment. TF-CBT is an evidence-based psychotherapy that utilizes an eight-phase treatment protocol aimed at addressing the needs of youth with difficulties related to traumatic events (Siegel et al. 2013). The goal of TF-CBT is to provide psychoeducation to the client and assist them in identifying and coping with trauma-related feelings, cognitions, and behaviors. Specific aspects of programs are tailored to the individual, and in this case would need to address the interpersonal violence was learned through ETV in childhood. In understanding that there is a strong association between early childhood ETV and later IPV offending, the use of trauma-informed treatments is key to effectively addressing the connection between trauma and interpersonal violence.

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