

Impact of Dating Violence on Male and Female College Students

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This study examined gender differences in impacts of dating violence (specifically minor and severe physical injury, depression, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder [PTSD], problems with alcohol, self-esteem, and relationship satisfaction) using a sample of 305 male and 363 female undergraduate students. Multiple linear regression models were used to test for the effects of dating violence victimization on the eight outcome variables while controlling for the effects of perpetration and psychological victimization. Results indicated that physical violence victimization did not impact problems with alcohol, self-esteem, or relationship satisfaction for either males or females. However, being a victim of minor violence significantly increased the levels of depression, anxiety, and PTSD and being a victim of severe violence significantly increased minor and severe injury. Different gender effects were seen in anxiety and PTSD scores where male victims scored higher than male nonvictims, but female victims did not differ significantly from female nonvictims and in minor and severe injury where both male and female victims scored higher than nonvictims, but the difference between the two groups was greater for men on the severe injury subscale and greater for women on the minor injury subscale. Overall, results of our analyses indicate that both male and female victims of dating violence experience physical and mental health consequences and, on the whole, do not support previous findings that would suggest that female victims suffer a greater impact than male victims do.

KEYWORDS: dating violence; impact; intimate partner violence; gender; physical violence