



Course Could Improve Dating Health in High School Students

Curriculum linked to less physical dating violence, greater condom use among boys

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TUESDAY, Aug. 4 (HealthDay News) -- A course on dating violence and healthy relationships may provide benefits for high school students, particularly boys, according to research published in the August issue of the *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*.

David A. Wolfe, Ph.D., of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Centre for Prevention Science in London, Canada, and colleagues analyzed data from 1,722 ninth-grade students attending schools that were randomly assigned to the intervention or to serve as controls. The intervention was a 21-lesson program led by teachers, integrating dating violence prevention with core lessons about sexual health, substance abuse prevention and healthy relationships.

After 2.5 years, the researchers found that physical dating violence was higher in control versus intervention students (adjusted odds ratio, 2.42). Although boys in intervention schools were less likely than the controls to engage in dating violence, girls in both groups had similar physical dating violence rates. Condom use was higher among sexually active boys in intervention schools (67.9 versus 58.6 percent).

"We found support for the hypothesis that teaching youth about healthy relationships and ways to avoid physical dating violence in Grade 9 Health classes would reduce physical dating violence 2.5 years later, but this effect may be limited to boys," the authors write. "Although overall rates of substance use and peer violence were unaffected by the intervention, exploratory analyses indicated that boys in the intervention schools reported safer sexual practices (indicated by always using condoms)."

Several co-authors received salary contributions from the grant that supported the study. Proceeds of the sale of the curriculum have been used for program research and development.

[Abstract](#)

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