

Impact of a Dating Violence Curriculum among High School Students in Port-au-Prince, Haiti
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Relationship violence is a serious public health issue for young people in Haiti. According to the 2012 Haiti Demographic and Health Survey, approximately 43 percent of adolescent girls aged 15-19 who were in union at the time of the survey or in the past had been a victim of emotional, physical or sexual abuse from their partners. Women aged 15-19 years had the highest rates of intimate partner violence victimization, almost one and a half times the national average. The survey also showed that 8 percent of women aged 15-19 years who had ever been in union were also perpetrators of intimate partner violence in the past 12 months – almost triple the national average.

In 2013, USAID's Population and Reproductive Health Associate Award funded a pilot test of a violence-prevention curriculum in four high schools in Port-au-Prince. The schools were matched by type (public or private) and one of each matched pair was randomly assigned to treatment or control. Treatment schools were exposed to the violence prevention curriculum whereas control schools received a poster competition on dating violence. Adolescents were eligible for study if they were enrolled in grades 10-12 in November 2013. Pretest and posttest exams were administered to adolescents in the treatment schools in November and December 2013, respectively, in order to assess knowledge gained from the violence-prevention curriculum. In addition, students in both treatment and control schools were administered a baseline evaluation questionnaire in November 2013 and a follow-up evaluation questionnaire in February 2014 to determine the impact of the curriculum on dating violence-related attitudes and behaviors.

The objectives of the curriculum are to: (a) raise students' awareness of what constitutes healthy and abusive relationships and of causes and consequences of DV; (2) equip students with the skills and resources to help themselves or friends in abusive relationships; and (3) equip students with the skills to develop healthy relationships, including positive communication, anger management and conflict resolution. This presentation focuses on the impact of the curriculum on dating violence knowledge, victimization and perpetration. Using multivariable logistic and simple linear regression models, the analysis examines whether dating violence norms, gender stereotyping, anger management, and constructive communication are mediating variables through which exposure to the curriculum and individual characteristics operate to influence a student's chances of dating violence victimization and/or perpetration. Implications for future research, programs, and policy are discussed.