PREVALENCE OF STALKING VICTIMIZATION AMONG FEMALE AND MALE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

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In Partial Fulfillment Of the Requirements for the Degree MASTER OF SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The primary objective of this study was to describe the prevalence of stalking victimization among a randomly selected sample of female and male undergraduate students. We examined the proportion of relationship violence victimization due to stalking and the co-occurrence between stalking and three additional forms of victimization (physical, sexual, and emotional violence).

Design: Cross-sectional, self-administered, anonymous paper and pencil survey.

Setting: Three urban colleges.

Participants: 910 female and male undergraduate students attending randomly selected classes on the days of survey administration.

Outcome Measures: Experience with stalking victimization and co-occurrence of physical, sexual, and emotional victimization since coming to college.

Results: Over half the survey respondents were female (57.1%). Nearly one-third of students reported experiencing any victimization (physical, sexual, emotional, and/or stalking) since coming to college. Stalking was the most frequently reported form of victimization (16.0%). Of the students reporting any victimization since coming to college, 29.7% experienced only stalking victimization and would not have been identified had stalking victimization not been assessed. A majority of stalking victims (59.6%) reported no co-occurring forms of victimization. Among stalking victims who reported at least one additional form of victimization, 57.6% reported both stalking and emotional victimization, 49.2% reported both stalking and sexual victimization, and 27.1% reported both stalking and physical victimization. Although most stalking (41.1%) was perpetrated by individuals known to the victim, such as friends, the perpetrators identified were less frequently (13.7%)

intimate or romantic partners. Women were more likely than men to report stalking victimization (22.1% vs. 7.9%, p<0.001).

Conclusions: Stalking was the most frequently reported form of victimization experienced since coming to college. Stalking may represent a unique component of relationship violence, as nearly 60% of students who reported stalking reported no other co-occurring forms of victimization (physical, sexual, or emotional). Further, stalking victims primarily reported that the perpetrator was someone known to them, although not necessarily an intimate partner. Awareness of stalking among those providing care for and resources to adolescents and young adults is critical to improving the safety and well-being of those affected.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

As adolescents and young adults experiment with relationships, they are particularly vulnerable to violence and coercion in their relationships (Silverman, Raj, Mucci, & Hathaway, 2001; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Despite rising public awareness, stalking is often overlooked as a form of relationship violence, given that it may not result in physical harm to victims. Further, many victims do not seek assistance in coping with this form of victimization (Buhi, Clayton, & Surrency, 2009; Haugaard & Seri, 2003). In a national survey, adolescents and young adults represented the majority of stalking victims, accounting for over 50% of the stalking cases reported (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Reported prevalence of stalking victimization among American college students ranges from 11% to 30% (Amar, 2006; Bjerregaard, 2000; Coker, Sanderson, Cantu, Huerta, & Fadden, 2008; Fremouw, Westrup, & Pennypacker, 1997; Haugaard & Seri, 2003; Logan, Leukefeld, & Walker, 2000).

Unfortunately, many existing studies of stalking victimization focus only on the experiences of women (Amar, 2006; Buhi, et al., 2009; Coker, et al., 2008), students who have been in a romantic relationship (Logan, et al., 2000), or those who recently experienced a break-up (Haugaard & Seri, 2003). These sampling strategies make it challenging to assess the prevalence of stalking among a general population of adolescents and young adults and to compare stalking prevalence to more commonly assessed forms of relationship victimization, such as physical, sexual, or emotional violence.

Using data obtained from a cross-sectional survey administered to students attending three urban college campuses, this study seeks to describe the prevalence of stalking victimization among female and male undergraduate students. We examined the proportion of victimization due solely to stalking and the proportion of victimization due to the co-occurrence between stalking and three additional categories of relationship violence (physical, sexual, and emotional). Secondarily, we explored the relationship between stalking victims and their perpetrators and whether there were any differences in prevalence of victimization by gender.

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND

Relationship Violence among College Students

Relationship violence (RV) encompasses the range of behaviors which comprise an abusive dynamic between individuals involved in a relationship. Violence can occur in relationships between adolescents and young adults who have not yet defined their relationship as romantic or intimate, those in established dating relationships, between individuals who have ended their relationship, or between friends or acquaintances. RV can take many forms including physical, sexual, emotional, and stalking. As adolescents and young adults experiment with relationships, they are particularly vulnerable to violence and coercion (Silverman, et al., 2001; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Reported prevalence of RV ranges from 10-80% depending on the form of violence measured, the method of assessment, and the sample of respondents queried (Forke, Myers, Catallozzi, & Schwarz, 2008; Foshee, Linder, MacDougall, & Bangdiwala, 2001; Halpern, Oslak, Young, Martin, & Kupper, 2001; Makepeace, 1986; Malik, Sorenson, & Aneshensel, 1997; Rickert, Wiemann, Vaughan, & White, 2004; Sears, Byers, & Price, 2007).

Stalking as a Form of RV Victimization

Stalking was not criminalized or recognized as a form of relationship violence until the 1990's. It continues to be overlooked as a form of RV, given that it often does not result in physical harm and victims may not seek assistance in coping with this form of violence (Buhi, et al., 2009; Haugaard & Seri, 2003). Further, popular culture and media often present

stalking as an issue affecting celebrities, not adolescents and young adults. However, stalking is a significant form of RV and generally refers to behaviors such as following, watching, calling, or writing the victim obsessively or engaging in behaviors that cause concern for personal safety including being pursued or harassed in an intentional or ongoing manner (Fisher, Cullen, & Turner, 2000; Spitzberg, 2002; Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Legal definitions vary from state to state, but key components of stalking behavior include "the willful, malicious, and repeated following and harassing of another person" (Tjaden, Thoennes, & Allison, 2000). One challenge in assessing the occurrence of stalking victimization is in understanding how victims perceive their experiences. For some individuals, unwanted attention may not register as a stalking behavior, while others may acknowledge and report such behaviors immediately.

Prevalence of Stalking Victimization

The National Violence Against Women Survey conducted by the National Institutes of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 1995 has served as the primary source of national data for stalking victimization prevalence among adults over age 18 (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). This survey found lifetime stalking victimization prevalence estimates of 12% for women and 6% for men (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). Of note, young adults aged 18-29 years represented the majority of stalking victims in this study, accounting for over 50% of the stalking cases reported. A more recent survey conducted in 2005 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found a lifetime stalking victimization prevalence of 4.5% among adults older than age 18, with 7% of women and 2% of men reporting stalking victimization (Basile, Swahn, Chen, & Saltzman, 2006). While

estimates of adult lifetime experiences of stalking victimization are valuable, recognizing that adolescents and young adults are at exceedingly high risk for relationship violence suggests that stalking among college populations may exceed the estimates of victimization found in adult samples.

Recent studies of stalking victimization among undergraduate students report rates which exceed those observed among adults. Reported prevalence of stalking victimization among American college students ranges from 12% to 30% for women and 11% to 24% for men (Amar, 2006; Bjerregaard, 2000; Coker, et al., 2008; Fremouw, et al., 1997; Haugaard & Seri, 2003; Logan, et al., 2000). One study of stalking victimization among college women found that the incidence of stalking victimization may be increasing from earlier estimates (Buhi, et al., 2009). Unfortunately, many of the existing studies of stalking victimization focus only on the experiences of female undergraduate students (Amar, 2006; Buhi, et al., 2009; Coker, et al., 2008) or on the experiences of students who have been in a romantic relationship (Logan, et al., 2000) or recently experienced a break-up (Haugaard & Seri, 2003). While one study did examine stalking prevalence among a diverse sample of students, it did not assess the prevalence of additional forms of RV, limiting the ability to compare stalking prevalence to that of more commonly measured forms of violence (physical, sexual, and emotional) (Bjerregaard, 2000). These study sampling strategies and designs make it challenging to assess the prevalence of stalking among a general population of adolescents and young adults and to compare stalking prevalence to more commonly assessed forms of victimization, such as physical, sexual, or emotional violence.

Survey Items Used to Assess Stalking Victimization

Estimates of stalking prevalence are largely obtained from self-report measures. However, the items used to assess stalking victimization vary widely from survey to survey, which presents challenges in comparing results. Stalking is frequently assessed with a single item such as "Have you ever been stalked or harassed by a partner, date, or someone important to you?" (Amar, 2006). However, other surveys include specific behaviors which define stalking victimization, such as "Has anyone repeatedly: Followed or spied on you? Watched you from afar? Waited for you outside or inside the places you go? Made unsolicited phone calls to you? Sent unsolicited letters to you?..." (Buhi, et al., 2009). The lack of consistent item wording limits the ability compare prevalence results across studies and populations. Additionally, there is contradictory evidence regarding whether detailed behavioral survey items obtain higher reported prevalence of stalking victimization compared to items which do not include specific behaviors (Davis & Frieze, 2000; Tjaden, et al., 2000).

Stalking Victim Gender

Although it has become increasingly noted that similar proportions of male and female adolescents and young adults report experiencing relationship violence (Forke, et al., 2008; Halpern, et al., 2001), stalking victimization is largely framed as a crime perpetrated by men against women. Although women have been found to report stalking at a much higher frequency than their male counterparts, accounting for approximately 60% to 80% of reported stalking victimization (Spitzberg, 2003), male victimization is common, with 10% to 25% of surveyed male undergraduate students reporting stalking victimization (Bjerregaard, 2000; Logan, et al., 2000). Given the high proportion of stalking experienced

by females, multiple studies have limited their examination of stalking victimization exclusively to populations of female students (Amar, 2006; Buhi, et al., 2009; Coker, et al., 2008). The exclusion of male respondents presents a significant limitation in understanding the total burden of stalking victimization among adolescents and young adults.

Examining the Relationship between Stalking Victims and Perpetrators The occurrence of stalking victimization among adolescents is often explored after termination of romantic relationships (Amar, 2006; Dutton & Winstead, 2010; Haugaard & Seri, 2003; Logan, et al., 2000; Roberts, 2005) and infrequently included as a form of violence in general surveys of RV prevalence among adolescents and young adults (Halpern, et al., 2001; Sabina & Straus, 2008). These study methods hamper the ability to examine the association between stalking and other forms of RV, such as physical, sexual or emotional. Additionally, when studies are limited to exploring stalking victimization following the termination of a relationship, there is an implicit assumption that the perpetrator is the victim's former partner. However, stalking can be perpetrated by friends, acquaintances, and strangers (Bjerregaard, 2000; Buhi, et al., 2009), and examining the proportion of stalking perpetrated by non-romantic partners is important in understanding the burden of stalking among adolescents and young adults. Further, Tjaden and Thoennes observed significant gender differences in the relationship between victims and perpetrators, with men reporting significantly more stalking perpetration by acquaintances and strangers when compared to women (Tjaden & Thoennes, 1998). This highlights the need to better understand the phenomenon of stalking in the diverse range of adolescent and young adult relationships, including those with partners, friends, acquaintances, and strangers.

Limitations of Existing Studies

While the prevalence of stalking victimization among college students has become more widely reported in recent years, there continue to be several limitations of the existing work which the present study seeks to address. First, most reports of stalking victimization do not include measures of other forms of RV (Amar, 2006; Bjerregaard, 2000; Buhi, et al., 2009; Fremouw, et al., 1997; Haugaard & Seri, 2003), such as physical, sexual or emotional victimization. Therefore, it is not possible to examine whether stalking victims experience co-occurring forms of violence or are singly victimized. Second, many studies include only female students (Amar, 2006; Buhi, et al., 2009; Coker, et al., 2008), limiting the ability to assess male victimization and to understand the full extent of stalking victimization on college campuses. Without measuring male victimization, it is impossible to determine whether there are any differences in victimization experiences by gender. Lastly, stalking frequently is examined as a form of victimization perpetrated by partners or former partners (Dutton & Winstead, 2010; Haugaard & Seri, 2003; Logan, et al., 2000). However, to fully understand the extent of stalking victimization among college students, it is necessary to examine stalking victimization in a broad range of relationships, which may provide insight regarding the need for interventions and education.

Objectives of the Present Study

The primary objective of this study was to describe the prevalence of stalking victimization among a randomly selected sample of female and male undergraduate students. We examined the proportion of RV victimization due solely to stalking and the co-occurrence between stalking and three additional categories of RV (physical, sexual, and

emotional victimization). Secondarily, we explored the relationship between stalking victims and their perpetrators and whether there were any differences in prevalence of RV victimization co-occurrence by gender.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Overview

We conducted a cross-sectional, self-administered, anonymous survey of female and male undergraduate students attending three urban colleges about their experiences with RV. Students enrolled in randomly selected courses were eligible to participate in this study. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for data collection activities was granted by all participating institutions, as well as The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. IRB approval was granted for the present secondary analysis study by Temple University (see Appendix A).

Setting

Three urban colleges were selected for participation in this study. These schools provided a racially and socio-economically diverse sample of participants. College A was a large, private university, College B, was a religiously affiliated institution, and College C was a nonresidential community college. Colleges A and B were both universities with predominately full-time students. Only the main campus of each institution was included in this study.

Sample Selection

Courses were selected for potential inclusion in this study by randomly selecting daytime classes from course rosters available online. This process was repeated during each

semester of the data collection period. Day classes from all disciplines, course levels, and undergraduate schools were eligible for inclusion. The distribution of courses selected and surveyed has been previously described (Forke, et al., 2008).

Professors were contacted via e-mail to describe the study and seek permission to administer a survey about relationship violence to the students enrolled in their course. For professors who agreed to provide their students the opportunity to participate, the study coordinator scheduled a mutually convenient time to administer the survey during the last ten minutes of class time. All students who were present on the day of survey administration were eligible to participate in the study, with the exception of those who had previously completed the survey in another course.

Survey Design and Content

The 45-item survey was created by the original study team (Forke, et al., 2008). Items related to relationship violence were adapted from previously validated tools, the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996) and the Conflict in Adolescent Dating Relationship Inventory (Wolfe, et al., 2001). The item regarding stalking victimization was developed specifically for inclusion on this survey. Survey items were modified to be brief enough for inclusion on the short survey and to ensure that items provided sufficient definitions of the forms of RV of interest. The original survey instrument used for data collection is provided in Appendix B. Items on the survey of interest for the present analysis included demographics (gender, race, Hispanic ethnicity, age, school of attendance, and years of college attendance) and experience of RV victimization since coming to college.

Five survey items were used to assess RV victimization. For this analysis, stalking victimization is the primary outcome of interest. To assess stalking victimization, students were asked "Since you have been at this institution, have you ever been stalked (followed by, watched, received calls or letters that caused you to have concern for your personal safety)?" Students checked either "No" or "Yes." Students who responded affirmatively to the item, were asked to indicate their relationship to the perpetrator (Casual acquaintance, Friend, Partner, Stranger, or Other). A free text field was provided for students to clarify the "Other" response option.

To assess co-occurring victimization, survey items were included for physical, sexual, and emotional victimization. To assess physical victimization, students were asked "Since you have been at this institution, have you been in a relationship in which you were pushed, grabbed, slapped, choked, or hit?" Two items were used to assess sexual victimization, the first was "Since you have been at this institution, has anyone ever forced you to have sexual contact against your will?" and the second item was "Since you have been at this institution, has anyone ever coerced or pressured you into having sexual contact?" An affirmative response to either item was considered a positive response to sexual victimization. The item used to assess emotional victimization was "Since you have been at this institution, have you been in a relationship where someone emotionally abused you (put you down or made you feel bad about yourself, was very possessive, or isolated you from friends or family)?" Each victimization item was coded as either a yes or no response.

Data Collection

Data were collected between January 2005 and November 2005. All data were obtained through paper and pencil surveys, which included both fixed choice and free text questions. The study coordinator and a trained counselor attended all survey administrations and provided a brief verbal overview of the study, describing its purpose, informing students that they did not need to complete the survey if they did not wish to do so, and providing instructions not to complete the survey if they had done so in a prior class. Students were instructed that they could leave blank any items they did not want to answer or return a blank survey if they did not want to participate. The counselor was present in the event that students wished to speak with someone after completing the survey or wanted advice about seeking further resources or assistance. Students were notified that by responding to and returning the survey they were consenting to participate in this study. Written documentation of consent was waived for this study, as it would have been the only identifying information collected. The survey took approximately five to ten minutes to complete. Each student was provided wallet-sized cards listing campus- and city-specific resources to assist with relationship violence. Additionally, all students were provided a small bag of candy as a token of appreciation for their participation.

Statistical Analysis

The analysis examines the prevalence of stalking victimization among both female and male college undergraduates. Further, we sought to determine the prevalence of co-occurring physical, sexual, and emotional RV victimization among students reporting stalking victimization and the proportion of students who would not have been classified as

victims had stalking not been included as a form of RV. For this analysis, RV victimization exposure was recoded into a single interval variable with values of 0, 1, 2, or 3, representing the number of co-occurring forms of RV victimization (physical, sexual and emotional) reported by a student.

Univariate statistics were used to examine the demographic characteristics of the sample, the proportion of students who had experienced stalking victimization, co-occurrence of stalking and other forms of RV victimization, and the proportion of stalking perpetrated by acquaintances or friends, partners, and strangers. Mean and standard deviation were reported for continuous variables. Students who experienced stalking victimization were compared to those who had not using chi-square tests to test if stalking victims had different experiences with physical, sexual or emotional RV victimization. Prevalence ratios and 95% confidence intervals are reported for these comparisons. Female and male students who reported stalking victimization were compared to examine whether there were any differences in RV victimization co-occurrence or relationship to perpetrator by gender. Significance was determined using two-sided tests with p≤0.05 for all comparisons. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS (IBM SPSS Inc., 2009) and SAS (SAS Institute Inc., 2008).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Demographics

This analysis includes 910 female and male undergraduate students 17-22 years of age. Demographic characteristics of the sample are provided in Table 1. Slightly over half of the respondents were female and a similar proportion was white. The mean age of respondents was 20.0 ± 1.2 years and the mean years of college attendance was 2.3 ± 1.0 years.

Prevalence of Stalking Victimization and Co-Occurrence with Other Forms of RV

Victimization

Among the 910 respondents, 32.2% (293/910) reported experiencing any form of victimization (physical, sexual, emotional, and/or stalking) since coming to college. Stalking victimization was the most frequently reported form of RV, reported by 16.0% (146/910) of students. Sexual victimization was the next most commonly reported form of violence, followed by emotional victimization and physical victimization (Figure 1). When stalking victimization was excluded, we observed an absolute decrease of 9.6% in the prevalence of any RV victimization, from 32.3% to 22.6%. Among college RV victims, 29.7% (87/293) experienced only stalking victimization and would not have been identified as a victim of relationship violence had stalking not been assessed on the survey.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Study Sample.

Demographic Characteristic	Total
	N=910 (%)
Gender	
Female	520 (57.1)
Male	390 (42.9)
Race	
White	534 (58.7)
Black	149 (16.4)
Asian	137 (15.1)
Other	85 (9.3)
Hispanic Ethnicity	
Yes	58 (6.4)
Age	
17	4 (0.4)
18	85 (9.3)
19	231 (25.4)
20	276 (30.3)
21	214 (23.5)
22	100 (11.0)
Years in College	
One or less years	216 (23.7)
Two years	338 (37.1)

Table 1. (Continued).

Demographic Characteristic	Total	
	N=910 (%)	
Three years	251 (27.6)	
Four or more years	105 (11.5)	
School		
College A	377 (41.4)	
College B	317 (34.8)	
College C	216 (23.7)	

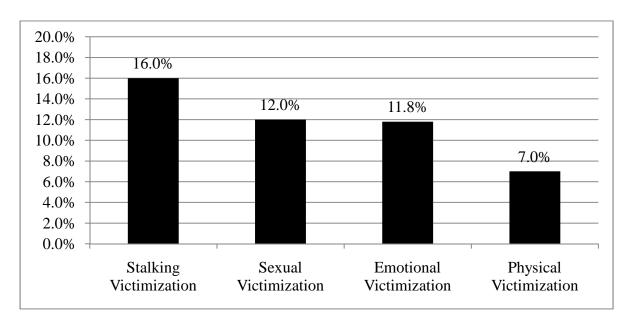


Figure 1. Proportion of Survey Respondents Reporting Each Form of RV Victimization.

Table 2 provides the proportion of stalking victims who reported 0, 1, 2, or 3 cooccurring forms of RV victimization (physical, sexual, and/or emotional). Notably, nearly
60% of students who reported stalking victimization reported no other forms of RV
victimization, and very few students reported stalking and two or more additional forms of
RV victimization.

Table 2. Prevalence of RV Victimization Co-occurrence by Number of Forms (0, 1, 2, or 3) among Students Reporting Stalking Victimization.

Number of forms of co-occurring	Students Reporting Stalking		
victimization reported	N=146 (%)		
No co-occurring victimization	87 (59.6)		
1 additional form of victimization	43 (29.5)		
2 additional forms of victimization	12 (8.2)		
3 additional forms of victimization	4 (2.7)		

Among stalking victims who reported at least one additional form of victimization, 57.6% (34/59) reported both stalking and emotional victimization, 49.2% (29/59) reported both stalking and sexual victimization, and 27.1% (16/59) reported both stalking and physical victimization. These results suggest that stalking victimization is not completely captured by any one of these more commonly measured forms of violence.

Table 3 compares students who reported stalking victimization since coming to college to those who did not. Students who reported stalking victimization were significantly more likely to report experiencing emotional, sexual, and physical RV victimization than students who did not report stalking victimization.

Table 3. Prevalence of Emotional, Sexual and Physical RV Victimization with Comparison by Experience of Stalking Victimization.

Forms of RV victimization	Students who	Students who	Prevalence
	Reported	Did Not Report	Ratio
	Stalking	Stalking	(95% CI)
	Victimization	Victimization	
	n=146 (%)	n=764 (%)	
No co-occurring victimization*	55 (37.7)	466 (61.0)	0.61 (0.5-0.77)
Emotional Victimization	34 (23.3)	73 (9.6)	2.4 (1.7-3.5)
Sexual Victimization	29 (19.9)	80 (10.5)	1.9 (1.3-2.8)
Physical Victimization	16 (11.0)	48 (6.3)	1.7 (1.0-3.0)
Any 2 of the above	12 (8.2)	40 (5.2)	1.6 (0.8-2.9)
All 3 of the above	4 (2.7)	7 (0.9)	3.0 (0.9-10.2)

^{*} For students who did not report stalking victimization, this category represents having experienced no RV victimization since coming to college.

Relationship between Stalking Victims and Perpetrators

Table 4 provides the prevalence of the types of relationship to perpetrator (acquaintance/friend, stranger, partner) reported by stalking victims. While nearly half of those who reported stalking victimization indicated that the perpetrator was a known acquaintance or friend, only 13.7% of victims identified their perpetrators as a partner. One in three students reported that their stalking victimization was perpetrated by a stranger. We examined whether there were any differences in the reported relationship to perpetrator by

the number of forms of RV co-occurrence reported. There were no significant differences observed for students who

Table 4. Prevalence of Relationship Status between Stalking Victims and Their Perpetrators.

Relationship to Perpetrator	Students Reporting Stalking
	N=146 (%)*
Acquaintance/Friend	60 (41.1)
Stranger	47 (32.2)
Partner	20 (13.7)
Not reported	17 (11.6)
Unable to determine relationship	$3~(2.1)^{\dagger}$

^{*}Percentages do not total 100%, as 1 student reported more than one perpetrator relationship (Acquaintance and Partner).

† Free text responses were unable to be categorized ("Baseball player," "Someone I saw before," and "Unknown").

reported that their victimization was perpetrated by a friend or stranger. However, students who identified a partner perpetrator were less likely to have experienced only stalking victimization compared to students who reported that their perpetrator was a not a partner (30.0% vs. 63.3%, $p \le 0.001$). This suggests that students who have been stalked by a partner are a unique group who may be at increased risk for experiencing other forms (physical, sexual, emotional) of RV victimization.

Associations between Stalking Victimization and Gender

Female students were significantly more likely than male students to report stalking victimization (22.1% vs. 7.9%, p<0.001). No other significant demographic differences were observed between students who reported stalking victimization and those who did not (results not presented).

We observed no significant differences in the proportion of female and male stalking victims who reported no co-occurring victimization, and experiencing one, two, or three additional forms of RV victimization (Table 5, p=0.7). Of all female victims in this study,

Table 5. Prevalence of RV Victimization Co-Occurrence by Number of Forms (0, 1, 2, or 3) among Students Reporting Stalking Victimization, Stratified by Gender.*

Number of forms of co-occurring	Female	Male
victimization	n=115 (%)	n=31 (%)
No co-occurring victimization	67 (58.3)	20 (64.5)
1 additional form of victimization	34 (29.6)	9 (29.0)
2 additional forms of victimization	11 (9.6)	1 (3.2)
3 additional forms of victimization	3 (2.6)	1 (3.2)

^{*} Chi-square p-value=0.7

30.0% (67/223) would not have been identified had stalking victimization been excluded from the survey, resulting in an additional 12.9% (67/520) of female students who were identified as victims of RV with the inclusion of stalking victimization. Among male students who reported RV victimization, 28.6% (20/70) would have been misclassified as

non-victims had stalking not been assessed, resulting in an additional 5.1% (20/390) of male students who were identified as victims of RV with the inclusion of stalking victimization.

When examining the association between gender and co-occurring RV victimization by type (physical, sexual, and/or emotional) among stalking victims who reported at least one additional form of victimization, we observed no significant difference between female and male stalking victims. Similar proportions of female and male stalking victims reported emotional, sexual and physical RV victimization (Table 6). The six male students who reported both stalking and emotional victimization are not the same students who reported experiencing both stalking and sexual victimization.

Table 6. Prevalence of RV Victimization Co-Occurrence by Form (Emotional, Sexual, Physical) Among Students Reporting Stalking Victimization and at Least One Additional Form of Victimization, Stratified by Gender.

Female	Male	P-values
n=48 (%)	n=11 (%)	
28 (58.3)	6 (54.5)	>0.99
23 (47.9)	6 (54.5)	0.75
14 (29.2)	2 (18.2)	0.71
	n=48 (%) 28 (58.3) 23 (47.9)	n=48 (%)

The proportion of female and male stalking victims who reported each type of perpetrator relationship is given in Table 7. There were no significant differences in relationship to perpetrator by gender observed. However, while a larger proportion of female than male stalking victims reported that the perpetrator was a stranger (33.0% vs. 19.4%, respectively), this difference was not statistically significant. This may be due to the small

proportion of male students who reported stalking victimization, which could have limited the power to detect a statistically significant difference.

Table 7. Prevalence of Relationship Status between Stalking Victims and Their Perpetrators, Stratified by Gender.

Relationship to Perpetrator	Female	Male
	n=115 (%)*	n=31 (%)
Acquaintance/Friend	48 (41.7)	12 (38.7)
Partner	15 (13.0)	5 (16.1)
Stranger	41 (35.7)	6 (19.4)
Not reported	10 (8.7)	7 (22.6)
Unable to determine relationship [†]	2 (1.7)	1 (3.2)

^{*}Percentages do not total 100%, as 1 female student reported more than one perpetrator relationship (Acquaintance and Partner).

[†] 2 female students and 1 male student provided free text which we were unable to categorize into any of the above relationships.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this cross-sectional survey of undergraduate students, one in six students reported having been a victim of stalking since coming to college. Stalking was the most frequently reported form of RV victimization experienced, exceeding the prevalence of emotional, sexual, or physical RV victimization experienced since coming to college. We found that 60% of the students who reported stalking victimization reported no other co-occurring forms of RV victimization. Without the inclusion of stalking victimization on this survey, these students would not have been classified as victims. This has important implications for future research, campus resources, and health care providers.

In this sample of undergraduate students, the overall prevalence of victimization was high, with one in three students having been a victim of stalking, physical, sexual, or emotional violence since coming to college. While existing studies of adolescent and young adult RV have examined the prevalence of stalking victimization, many of these studies do not include measurement of other forms of violence (physical, sexual, or emotional) (Bjerregaard, 2000; Buhi, et al., 2009; Fremouw, et al., 1997; Haugaard & Seri, 2003). The design of these studies limits our ability to examine the prevalence of stalking in relation to other forms of victimization. The present study helps to address this limitation by providing sufficient information to assess the burden of stalking victimization in comparison to other forms of violence.

Our prevalence of stalking victimization (16%) is slightly lower than that reported in existing studies, where observed prevalence ranges between 20% and 30% (Bjerregaard,

2000; Fremouw, et al., 1997; Haugaard & Seri, 2003; Logan, et al., 2000). However, these studies often assess lifetime prevalence of stalking (Bjerregaard, 2000) or stalking perpetrated following the break-up of a romantic relationship (Haugaard & Seri, 2003; Logan, et al., 2000). Our study measured victimization experienced only since coming to college and among all students, regardless of relationship status, which may have resulted in the slightly lower estimate of stalking victimization prevalence. Consistent with prior studies, we found that women were more likely than men to report stalking victimization (Bjerregaard, 2000; Haugaard & Seri, 2003). Comparing the prevalence of stalking among women and men separately, the prevalence among female students in this study (22.1%) is similar to that reported by others, regardless of the period of report (lifetime or since beginning college) or with regards to relationship to perpetrator(Amar, 2006; Bjerregaard, 2000; Buhi, et al., 2009; Coker, et al., 2008; Haugaard & Seri, 2003). However, the prevalence among male students (7.9%) is lower than that reported by others (Bjerregaard, 2000; Haugaard & Seri, 2003).

If stalking had not been included as a form of RV victimization on this survey, nearly 30% of victims would not have been identified. By excluding stalking from definitions of victimization, researchers and health care providers may be significantly underestimating the proportion of young adults affected by violence. Further, we determined that the majority of students who reported stalking victimization were singly victimized, such that they experienced only stalking victimization and no other forms of RV. For those stalking victims who experienced at least one additional form of victimization (physical, sexual, or emotional violence), we observed that there was no single additional form of violence which all stalking victims reported. This further suggests that stalking victimization may be a distinct form of

violence experienced by adolescents and young adults. By including stalking as a form of victimization in this study, we observed a nearly 10% absolute increase in victimization among all students. The proportion of students who reported only experiencing stalking suggests that stalking may represent a unique form of victimization which requires existing definitions and measurement tools to be expanded. Including stalking as a form of violence assessed in adolescent and young adult relationships may help to avoid underestimating the prevalence of victimization and, therefore, ensure that those in need of resources or other assistance are accurately identified.

Stalking has been associated with significant adverse mental health outcomes, such as post-traumatic stress symptoms and depression, as well as an increased likelihood to report poor current health status (Amar, 2006; Basile, Arias, Desai, & Thompson; Davis, Coker, & Sanderson, 2002; Westrup, Fremouw, Thompson, & Lewis, 1999). If those responsible for providing health care services to young adults and creating campus resources are unaware of the prevalence of stalking victimization, they may be unable to adequately anticipate and respond to the needs of victims. It is critical that education regarding healthy relationship behaviors focus not only on physical or sexual violence, but also victimization which may not be visibly apparent but still contributes to adverse health outcomes. It is unknown from our work whether the resource, intervention, and support needs of stalking victims are different from those of victims of the more commonly assessed forms of violence.

Both prior research (Logan, et al., 2000; Roberts, 2005) and the present study found that students who reported stalking victimization were more likely to experience co-occurring forms of RV (physical, sexual, and emotional). Existing evidence suggests that increased exposure to adverse experiences (such as physical abuse, psychological abuse,

sexual abuse, and witnessing domestic violence in the home) results in an accumulation of risk for adverse adult health outcomes (Dube, Anda, Felitti, Edwards, & Williamson, 2002; Felitti, et al., 1998). Future work to understand how stalking and other forms of RV (physical, sexual, emotional) may be associated with an increase in adolescents' risk for adverse health outcomes is necessary to ensure that the physical and mental health needs of adolescents and young adults are being met.

A substantial proportion of the stalking victimization reported in the present study was perpetrated by known acquaintances or friends, but not necessarily partners. While adolescent and young adult stalking victimization has been previously framed as a phenomenon arising from the dissolution of romantic relationships (Dutton & Winstead, 2010; Haugaard & Seri, 2003; Logan, et al., 2000; Roberts, 2005), our results have important implications for adolescent relationship education efforts. Often, efforts to promote healthy relationship behaviors focus only on romantic partnerships. These data suggest that stalking is a feature of many adolescent relationships and indicate the need for education around unwanted pursuit behaviors in all types of adolescent and young adult relationships.

Media reports of stalking often describe stranger perpetrated stalking of well-known individuals, such as celebrities. However, this image appears to be different than the lived experiences of young adults, where only a third of the stalking experiences were perpetrated by a stranger. Instead, we observed that a substantial proportion of the stalking victimization reported was perpetrated by an individual known to the victim (41.1% by acquaintances or friends and 13.7% by partner). This is of particular concern on college campuses where there may be expectations of a strong sense of community which can be undermined by this violence. Additionally, these perceptions of safety may reduce the likelihood that students

will report their stalking victimization. However, it is important to recognize that one in three stalking victims reported that the perpetrator was a stranger in the present study. This suggests that in addition to including stalking in measures of relationship violence, it must also be explored in screening for general violence and safety, to ensure that all victims are appropriately identified and referred to resources. Stranger perpetrated stalking is a threat to the safety of all members of a campus community and must not be ignored. Qualitative research is needed to understand the threat to campus safety caused by stalking, particularly with regards to electronic forms of stalking such as e-mail or texting, which can make escaping victimization more difficult.

Prior studies of adolescents and young adults suggest that victims of relationship violence are unlikely to seek resources or services (Ashley & Foshee, 2005; Próspero & Vohra-Gupta, 2008). Many adolescents and young adults report purposefully not telling friends and family members about their stalking victimization (Haugaard & Seri, 2003) and fewer than 4% of female stalking victims sought police assistance (Buhi, et al., 2009). Given the high prevalence of stalking victimization among this sample of students, it is important to understand how students respond to or report this violence to campus authorities, police, or health care providers. We must attempt to understand how the needs of stalking victims are similar to or different from victims of other forms of RV in order to help protect student safety and promote mental health. Further, we do not know if adolescents and young adults are more or less likely to report stalking, compared to other forms of RV. While there is evidence to suggest that stalking victims need mental health services, qualitative research to help examine whether victims consider stalking to be on the same reportable level as other types of RV will be valuable in better understanding resource and educational needs.

We found that women were significantly more likely than men to report stalking victimization, but no other demographic differences existed. There were no differences between female and male stalking victims' reports of co-occurring victimization, either by specific form (physical, sexual, emotional) or by number of forms experienced. Further, there were no significant differences in the relationship to perpetrator reported. Few male students reported stalking victimization in this study (n=31), which may have resulted in insufficient power to detect significant differences between genders. We also do not know if women and men reported victimization experiences differently in response to our survey item. However, stalking victimization was reported by 8% of all male students surveyed, which is an important consideration for those interacting with young adult males. These victims may be hesitant to disclose their victimization for fear of judgment or being perceived as non-masculine. It is important to create an environment where all students, regardless of gender, feel safe enough to seek assistance for victimization.

Limitations

There are several limitations of the present study. First, all data were obtained via retrospective self-report. This may have resulted in an underestimation of RV victimization prevalence, specifically for stalking. Given the covert nature of stalking behaviors compared to other forms of RV, students may be unaware that they are being pursued. We expect that this may decrease the reported prevalence of stalking victimization, more so than would be observed for physical, sexual, or emotional violence, forms of victimization which are more apparent to the victim. If stalking were underreported differently than other forms of violence, we would expect that a larger proportion of students may be victims of RV than

were observed here and the proportion of students who are experiencing only stalking victimization may be greater than observed. Secondly, we only surveyed in-school, collegeaged adolescents and young adults. However, we administered the survey on three different college campuses which provided a sample of students that were diverse in terms of race, age, and socio-economic status. Although we noted no demographic differences between students who reported stalking and those who did not, with the exception of gender, we cannot ensure that these results are generalizable to populations of adolescents and young adults not enrolled in school. Third, our measure of stalking victimization only focused on experiences since coming to college, as opposed to lifetime experiences. We would again expect that this would result in an underestimation of stalking victimization prevalence, as any stalking experienced prior to coming to college would not have been reported. Future work should include younger adolescents and lifetime measures of stalking victimization. Fourth, this study may have been underpowered to detect any significant gender differences in the co-occurrence of RV victimization and future work may be necessary with larger samples of male students to determine if our prevalence estimate is accurate. Lastly, electronic forms of communication (such as e-mail, social media, or text messaging) were not included in the definition of stalking used on this survey. However, it is unknown whether students reported stalking perpetrated through these media. This limitation would likely have resulted in an underreporting of stalking victimization. Given the lack of a widely used and validated measure of stalking victimization, future work is needed to develop a broad behaviorally-based stalking item than can be incorporated into existing measures of victimization.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Given the high proportion of students who reported stalking victimization, these results clearly indicate the need to include stalking behaviors in assessments of exposure to relationship violence. Not only was stalking victimization the most frequently reported form of RV measured, a majority of students who reported stalking victimization were singly victimized, experiencing no co-occurring forms of RV. Had stalking been excluded from our measures, as it is from many existing assessments of RV victimization, we would have underestimated the proportion of students exposed to violence in their relationships and potentially in need of support and resources. Additionally, given the proportion of stalking perpetrated by strangers, it is important that stalking be included in general assessments of violence among adolescents and young adults. These results suggest that stalking represents a unique form of victimization, which should be assessed independently in both surveys of relationship violence and general assessments of violence and safety. Stalking victimization, regardless of the relationship to perpetrator may require additional education, services, and resources for care providers and victims alike.

While the majority of stalking was perpetrated by individuals known to the victim, the most common relationship to the perpetrator identified was as an acquaintance or friend. Although health education efforts about relationship behaviors often focus on romantic partnerships and physical or sexual violence, our data suggest that stalking may occur in a range of adolescent relationships. There is a clear need for continued health education about safety in all forms of young adult relationships. Given that stalking victimization may

contribute to significant adverse mental health outcomes, health care and service providers must better understand how to identify and respond to victims who disclose their stalking experiences.

Adolescent and young adult health service providers must be aware of the significant burden stalking victimization poses. While stalking often may be overlooked in assessments of unhealthy relationships and violence experienced by young adults, it is unknown whether such victimization affects adolescents and young adults in ways that are different from the more commonly assessed forms of violence. Future research should examine how best to provide information about stalking and safety to victims and how providers can assist to ensure victim safety. Qualitative information from victims may help us understand how stalking is related to more commonly assessed forms of violence, such as physical, sexual or emotional and whether victims of stalking report or perceive their experiences differently from victims of other types of violence. Such information is necessary to ensure that services meet the needs of victims and to better understand this unique form of victimization.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Temple University IRB Approval Letter

Appendix B: Original Study Survey

Appendix A. Temple IRB Approval Letter



Office for Human Subjects Protections 3400 North Broad Street Institutional Review Board

Medical Intervention Committees A1 & A2

Social and Behavioral Committee B

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19140 Phone:215.707.3390 Fax:215.707.8387 e-mail: richard.throm@temple.edu

MEMORANDUM

To: WHITAKER, ROBERT CARROLL CHP-PUBLIC HEALTH (0910)

From: Richard C. Throm

Director, Office for Human Subjects Protection Institutional Review Board Coordinator

Date: 30-Sep-2010

Re: Exempt Request Status for IRB Protocol:

13413: Exploring stalking victimization among male and female undergraduate students

It has been determined by Expedited Review that this study qualifies for exemption status as follows:

45 CFR 46 Protection of Human Subjects

Section 101 (b): Unless otherwise required by department or agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects will be in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy:

Exemption 4: Collection or Study of Existing Data. Research involving the collection or study of existing data, documents, records, pathological specimens, or diagnostic specimens, if these sources are publicly available or if the information is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subject.

Nothing further is required from you at this time; however, if anything in your research design should change, you must notify the Institutional Review Board immediately.

If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 215-707-8757.

Thank you for keeping the IRB informed of your clinical research.

Appendix B. Original Study Survey

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE SURVEY

As part of a study being conducted on 3 local college campuses, students are being asked to complete a survey to help us learn more about relationship violence on college campuses. This survey is anonymous and confidential; you will not be asked to identify yourself at any time. It should take about 10 minutes to complete, but take as much or as little time as you need. Try to answer as honestly as you can. If filling out this survey brings up feelings or questions you want to talk about, please refer to the resource sheet you received with this survey.

Violence, for the purposes of this study, is defined as: any physical, sexual and/or emotional contact of a frightening, angry, threatening, negative, uninvited, or unwanted nature with a person within the context of a relationship. Violence does not necessarily result in physical injury.

Please check the answers that best describe you and your experience.

1. Sex: □ Male □ Female □ Other				
2. How would you identify yourself? American Indian/Alaska Native Asian Black or African American Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander				
2a. Do you identify yourself as Hispanic? ☐ No ☐ Yes				
3. Age: years old				
4. School ☐ School A ☐ School B ☐ School C				
5. For how many years have you attended this school? ☐ one or less ☐ two ☐ three ☐ four or more				
The following questions refer to friends and acquaintances you go to school with now:				
6. How many people do you know at school who have been hurt or threatened by someone with whom they are/were in a relationship? □ None □ 1-4 □ 5 or more				
7. How many people do you know at school who have had sexual contact against their will? □ None □ 1-4 □ 5 or more				
8. How many people do you know at school who have hurt or threatened someone with whom they are/were in a relationship? □ None □ 1-4 □ 5 or more				
9. How many people do you know at school who have forced someone with whom they are/were in a relationship to have sexual contact with them? □ None □ 1-4 □ 5 or more				

The following questions refer to your childhood:			
10. Growing up, did you witness adults in your home being violent (physically, sexually, and/or emotionally) towards one another? □ No (If NO, skip to question 13) □ Yes			
11. If YES, who was hurting whom?			
12. At what age do you first remember witnessing violence in your home?			
The following questions refer to <u>your</u> relationships <u>prior to coming to this institution</u> :			
13. Before coming to this institution, were you ever been pushed, grabbed, slapped, choked, or hit by someone with whom you were in a relationship? ☐ No ☐ Yes, I was years old the first time this happened. It was a ☐ male ☐ female ☐ both			
 14. Before coming to this institution, did someone with whom you were in a relationship ever pressure you into having sexual contact? □ No □ Yes, I was years old the first time this happened. It was a □ male □ female □ both 			
15. Before coming to this institution, did someone with whom you were in a relationship ever force you to have sexual contact against your will? □ No □ Yes, I was years old the first time this happened. It was a □ male □ female □ both			
16. Before coming to this institution, were you in a relationship where someone emotionally abused you (put you down or made you feel bad about yourself, was very possessive, or isolated you from family or friends)? □ No □ Yes, I was years old the first time this happened. It was a □ male □ female □ both			
17. Before coming to this institution, did you ever push, grab, slap, choke, or hit someone with whom you were in a relationship? □ No □ Yes, I was years old the first time this happened. It was a □ male □ female □ both			
18. Before coming to this institution, did you ever pressure someone with whom you were in a relationship into having sexual contact? □ No □ Yes, I was years old the first time this happened. It was a □ male □ female □ both			
 19. Before coming to this institution, did you ever force someone with whom you were in a relationship to have sexual contact with you against his or her will? □ No □ Yes, I was years old the first time this happened. It was a □ male □ female □ both 			
20. Before coming to this institution, were you in a relationship where you emotionally abused someone (put that person down, was possessive, isolated that person from family or friends)? □ No □ Yes, I was years old the first time this happened. It was a □ male □ female □ both			

21. Before coming to this institution, did you tell anyone about violence (physical, sexual, a emotional) that you have experienced in a relationship? □ No □ Yes, I told	and/or . □ NA
100,11014	
The following questions refer to your relationships since you've been at this institut relationship can be with someone at the school or not; can be the same person or dipeople): 22. Since you have been at this institution, have you been in a relationship? □ No □ Yes, with a □ male □ female □ both How many relationships?	
23. Since you have been at this institution, have you been in a relationship in which you we experiencing violence (physical, sexual, and/or emotional)? □ No □ Yes, by a □ male □ female □ both □ During my □ 1 st year □ 2 nd year □ 3 rd year □ 4 th year (check all that apply)	ere
24. Since you have been at this institution, have you been in a relationship in which you we pushed, grabbed, slapped, choked, or hit? □ No □ Yes, by a □ male □ female □ both It was a □ casual acquaintance, □ friend, □ partner, □ stranger, □ other	
25. Since you have been at this institution, has anyone ever forced you to have sexual coragainst your will? □ No □ Yes, by a □ male □ female □ both It was a □ casual acquaintance, □ friend, □ partner, □ stranger, □ other	
26. Since you have been at this institution, has anyone ever coerced or pressured you into sexual contact? □ No □ Yes, by a □ male □ female □ both It was a □ casual acquaintance, □ friend, □ partner, □ stranger, □ other	-
27. Since you have been at this institution, have you been in a relationship where someone emotionally abused you (put you down or made you feel bad about yourself, was very possessive, or isolated you from friends or family)? □ No □ Yes, by a □ male □ female □ both It was a □ casual acquaintance, □ friend, □ partner, □ stranger, □ other	
28. Since you have been at this institution, have you ever been stalked (followed by, watch received calls or letters that caused you to have concern for your personal safety)? □ No □ Yes, by a □ male □ female □ both It was a □ casual acquaintance, □ friend, □ partner, □ stranger, □ other	
29. Since you have been at this institution, have you ever pushed, grabbed, slapped, chok the person with whom you are in a relationship? □ No □ Yes, the person was a □ male □ female □ both It was a □ casual acquaintance, □ friend, □ partner, □ stranger, □ other	
30. Since you have been at this institution, have you ever forced the person with whom you relationship to have sexual contact against his/her will? □ No □ Yes, the person was a □ male □ female □ both It was a □ casual acquaintance, □ friend, □ partner, □ stranger, □ other	

31. Since you have been at this institution, have you ever coerced or pressured the person with whom you are in a relationship to have sexual contact? □ No □ Yes, the person was a □ male □ female □ both It was a □ casual acquaintance, □ friend, □ partner, □ stranger, □ other					
32. Since you have been at this institution, have you been in a relationship where you emotionally abused someone (put him/her down or made him/her feel bad about him/herself)? □ No □ Yes, the person was a □ male □ female □ both It was a □ casual acquaintance, □ friend, □ partner, □ stranger, □ other					
33. Are you in a relationship now? □ No □ Yes, with a □ male □ female □ both					
34. Are you ever afraid of the person with whom you are currently in a relationship? □ No □ Yes □ NA					
35. Do you think he or she is afraid of you? □ No □ Yes □ NA					
36. Does this person carry a gun or any other type of weapon? □ No □ Yes □ NA					
37. Have you told anyone about violence, threats, or coercion that you have experienced in a relationship? □ No □ Yes, I told □ NA					
38. Please tell us what resources exist on campus for dealing with this type of violence.					
39. Have you accessed any campus services? □ No. Why not?					
☐ Yes. Which ones?					
Were these resources helpful to you? ☐ No ☐ Yes ☐ NA					

The following questions refer to resources and support systems:				
40. If someone were physically hurting you in a relationship to whom would you go for help (check all that apply)?				
□ nobody □ friend □ relative □ resident advisor □ school health care provider/student health center □ school women's health services □ school counseling center □ school rape crisis center □ school women's center □ school clergy	□ school police/ security □ non-school health care provider □ non-school counseling center □ non-school rape crisis center □ non-school women's center □ non-school police □ non-school clergy □ other			
41. If someone was forcing or pressuring you to have sex to whom would you go for help (check all that apply)?				
 □ nobody □ friend □ relative □ resident advisor □ school health care provider/student health center □ school women's health services □ school counseling center □ school rape crisis center □ school women's center □ school clergy 	□ school police/ security □ non-school health care provider □ non-school counseling center □ non-school rape crisis center □ non-school women's center □ non-school police □ non-school clergy □ other			
42. If someone were emotionally abusing you (put you down was very possessive, or isolated you from family or friend go for help (check all that apply)?				
□ nobody □ friend □ relative □ resident advisor □ school health care provider/student health center □ school women's health services □ school counseling center □ school rape crisis center □ school women's center □ school clergy	□ school police/ security □ non-school health care provider □ non-school counseling center □ non-school rape crisis center □ non-school women's center □ non-school police □ non-school clergy □ other			
43. If someone were stalking you (followed by, watched, rec have concern for your personal safety)to whom would yo				
□ nobody□ friend□ relative□ resident advisor	□ school police/ security □ non-school health care provider □ non-school counseling center □ non-school rape crisis center			

	□ school health care provider/student health center □ school women's health services □ school counseling center □ school rape crisis center □ school women's center □ school clergy	r □ non-school women's center □ non-school police □ non-school clergy □ other
44.	What else could your school do to help students deal vertical in relationships?	vith violence (physical, sexual, and/or
45.	What else you would like us to know on the subject of emotional) in relationships?	violence (physical, sexual and/or
		-

THANK YOU!