

Domestic Violence in Latin America and the Caribbean: Similar Levels of Abuse Perpetration by Men and Women

Compiled by the Domestic Abuse and Violence International Coalition

March 28, 2022

This report summarizes five studies on domestic violence, psychological abuse, and sexual abuse conducted in Latin America (Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Mexico, and Venezuela) and the Caribbean (Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad & Tobago). The information was obtained from the compilation by Esquivel-Santoveña, Esteban Eugenio; Lambert, Teri; Hamel, John (2013). *Partner Abuse Worldwide, Partner Abuse, Volume 4, Issue 1.*

To be included in this summary, the study had to use well-validated survey instruments and consist of community or other broad samples of both males and females.

Four of the studies assessed levels of violence and abuse *perpetration*, while three studies looked at violence and abuse *victimization*. Two studies reported levels of mutual abuse. The five studies reported the following numbers of male-female comparisons:

- Physical violence: 18 comparisons
- Psychological abuse: 10 comparisons
- Sexual abuse: 7 comparisons
- Total: 35 comparisons

Methods

For each male-female comparison, the percentage difference was calculated. If the percentage difference is 5.0 or less, the comparison was classified as “symmetrical.” For example, if the perpetration rate was males=13% and females=17%, the level of violence or abuse was deemed to be the same.

Findings

The country-specific findings for Physical Violence, Psychological Abuse, and Sexual Abuse are presented below. 54.3% of the comparisons revealed symmetry in abuse rates between the sexes. Sixteen comparisons (45.7%) revealed differences that were *asymmetrical*, i.e., greater than 5.0%. Most of the asymmetrical findings involved a female perpetrator and male victim:

Physical Violence:

Female perpetrator:

- Guatemala: Males: 17%, Females: 32%
- Mexico: Males: 27%, Females: 47%
- Barbados: Males: 48.8%, Females: 53.9%

- Jamaica: Males: 39.9%, Females: 52.4%
- Brazil: Males: 15.0%; Females: 31.3%

Male victim:

- Chile: Males: 26.6%, Females: 15.1%
- Mexico: Males: 22.7%, Females: 9.9%

Female victim:

- Barbados: Males: 44.7%, Females: 50%

Psychological Abuse:

Female perpetrator:

- Jamaica: Males: 69.8%, Females: 76.6%
- Trinidad and Tobago: Males: 70.5%, Females: 77.4%

Male victim:

- Barbados: Males: 76.1%, Females: 70.7%
- Chile: Males: 79.9%, Females: 67.3%

Sexual Abuse:

Male perpetrator:

- Barbados: Males: 39.6%, Females: 52.8%
- Jamaica: Males: 57.2%, Females: 72.6%

Female victim:

- Barbados: Males: 39.6%, Females: 52.8%
- Jamaica: Males: 57.2%, Females: 72.6%

Conclusions

Over half of the comparisons showed symmetry in abuse rates between the sexes. Of the 16 comparisons that showed lack of symmetry between the sexes, most indicated higher rates of female perpetration and male victimization. The only exceptions were Sexual Abuse in Barbados and Jamaica, and Physical Violence in Barbados.

Domestic violence programs need to equally address male and female perpetrators, as well as male and female victims.

Brazil, Guatemala, Mexico, and Venezuela

Citation	Straus, M.A. (2008) <i>Dominance and symmetry in partner violence by male and female university students in 32 nations</i> . <i>Children and Youth Services Review</i> , 30, 3, 252- 275.
Sample Characteristics	Data from the International Violence Study regarding dating violence were collected from a convenience sample of 13,601 students at 68 universities in 32 nations. The samples were collected in Brazil: n=236, Guatemala: n=168, Mexico: n=190, and Venezuela: n=209 for a total of 803 persons. Males: 34%, Females: 66%. Students included in the study had been in a relationship for one month or more.
Methods and Design	A consortium of researchers from all major regions of the world took part in this International Dating Violence Study. This section summarizes the research data for Mexico, Brazil, Guatemala, and Venezuela. The core questions are the same in every region where the research was conducted. Most universities had a participation rate of 85% to 95%. Dominance was measured by items from the Personal and Relationships Profile – e.g., “I generally have the final say when my partner and I disagree,” and “My partner needs to remember that I am in charge.” Impression management was controlled by using the Limited Disclosure Scale of the PRP
Results	<i>PERPETRATION – PREVIOUS YEAR</i> <i>Physical Violence:</i> Brazil: Males: 22%, Females: 23%. Guatemala: Males: 17%, Females: 32% Mexico: Males: 27%, Females: 47% Venezuela: Males: 25%, Females: 24% <i>Severe Physical Violence:</i> Brazil: Males: 7%, Females: 6% Guatemala: Males: 6%, Females: 9% Mexico: Males: 13%, Females: 17% Venezuela: Males: 15%, Females: 10% <i>Mutual Physical Violence:</i> Brazil: 22% Guatemala: 24% Mexico: 44% Venezuela: 24%

Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad & Tobago

Citation	Le Franc, E., Samms-Vaughan, M., Hambleton, I., Fox, K., & Brown, D. (2008). <i>Interpersonal violence in three Caribbean countries: Barbados, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago</i> . Pan American Journal of Public Health, 24(6), 409-421.
Sample Characteristics	Males and females 15-30 years of age. Total sample=3,401. Barbados: n=1,003, Jamaica: n=1,402, Trinidad and Tobago: n=996
Methods and Design	Stratified (3-level) cross sectional sampling was used that mimicked the national census methodology from each country. Face-to-face interviews. Lifetime physical, psychological, and sexual intimate partner violence perpetration and victimization by partners, acquaintances, and strangers was assessed via the Conflict Tactics Scale 2.
Results	<p><i>PERPETRATION -- LIFETIME</i></p> <p><i>Physical Violence:</i> Barbados: Males: 48.8%, Females: 53.9% Jamaica: Males: 39.9%, Females: 52.4% Trinidad and Tobago: Males: 45%, Females: 48.2%</p> <p><i>Psychological Abuse:</i> Barbados: Males: 76.5%, Females: 74.6% Jamaica: Males: 69.8%, Females: 76.6% Trinidad and Tobago: Males: 70.5%, Females: 77.4%</p> <p><i>Sexual Abuse:</i> Barbados: Males: 42.1%, Females: 47.4%. Jamaica: Males: 60%, Females: 67.9%. Trinidad and Tobago: Males: 52.9%, Females: 49.9%.</p> <p><i>VICTIMIZATION -- LIFETIME</i></p> <p><i>Physical Violence:</i> Barbados: Males: 44.7%, Females: 50% Jamaica: Males: 40.4%, Females: 45.3% Trinidad and Tobago: Males: 47.7%, Females: 45.2%</p>

	<p><i>Psychological Abuse:</i> Barbados: Males: 76.1%, Females: 70.7% Jamaica: Males: 66.5%, Females: 69.4% Trinidad and Tobago: Males: 66.6%, Females: 69.3%</p> <p><i>Sexual Abuse:</i> Barbados: Males: 39.6%, Females: 52.8% Jamaica: Males: 57.2%, Females: 72.6% Trinidad and Tobago: Males: 52.5%, Females: 51.6%</p>
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BRAZIL

Citation	Gomez, A. M., Speizer, I. S., & Moracco, K. E. (2011). <i>Linkages between gender equity and intimate partner violence among urban Brazilian youth</i> . Journal of Adolescent Health, 49(4), 393- 399
Sample Characteristics	This study involved participants who were between the ages of 15 and 24 years living in Rio de Janeiro. Males: n=240; Females: n=198.
Methods and Design	A survey was distributed to measure the association between IPV and gender equality.
Results	<p><i>PERPETRATION – PREVIOUS SIX MONTHS</i></p> <p><i>Physical Violence:</i> Males: 15.0%; Females: 31.3%</p> <p><i>Psychological Abuse:</i> Males: 12.5%; Females: 16.7%</p> <p><i>Sexual Abuse:</i> Males: 0.8%; Females: 3.5%</p>

CHILE

Citation	Lehrer, J.A., Lehrer, E.L., & Zhao, Z. (2009). <i>Physical and psychological dating violence in young men and women in Chile: Results from a 2005 survey of university students</i> . International Journal of Injury Control and Safety Promotion, 16(4), 205-214
Sample Characteristics	This study was conducted in Santiago, Chile at a large public university. All students attending the general education classes conducted in 2005 were included in the study. Ages ranged from 17 to 30 years of age, with a median of 20 years. Males: n=466, Females n=484.
Methods and Design	This study utilized the 2005 Survey of Student Well-Being to collect quantitative data. Questions regarding psychological dating violence, physical violence victimization in the last 12 months and since the age of 14, severity of abuse and injury were asked. Respondents were to answer questions that involved a date or romantic relationship in the testing period. Assaults or injuries were omitted if the partner was acting in self-defense.
Results	VICTIMIZATION – PREVIOUS 12 MONTHS <i>Physical Violence:</i> Males: 26.6%, Females: 15.1%. <i>Psychological Abuse:</i> Males: 79.9%, Females: 67.3%

MEXICO

Citation	Rivera-Rivera, L., Allen-Leigh, B., Rodriguez-Ortega, G., Chavez-Ayala, R., & Lazcano-Ponce, E. (2007). <i>Prevalence and correlates of adolescent dating violence: Baseline study of a cohort of n=7960 male and female Mexican public school students</i> . Preventive Medicine, 44:477-484.
Sample Characteristics	Students in junior high, high school and college, from a systematic, random sample in urban, suburban and rural areas of Mexico. Ages: 11-24 years. N=7,960. Males (42%) and Females (58%).
Methods and Design	Respondents administered written questionnaire in the classroom; asked about demographic characteristics. Health risk behaviors, intrafamily violence, dating violence. Administered modified Conflict Tactics Scale. Asked about violence perpetrated against them by other family members; and asked if their most recent dating partner had made them feel inferior, insulted them, forced to commit an illegal act, pushed or punched them; then asked if they perpetrated on partner.
Results	PERPETRATION <i>Physical Violence:</i> Males: 19.5%, Females: 21.0%

Psychological Abuse:
Males: 4.3%, Females: 4.2%

Mutual:
Males: 5.5%, Females 7.5%

VICTIMIZATION

Physical Violence:
Males: 22.7%, Females: 9.9%

Psychological Abuse:
Males: 8.6%, Females: 9.4%

Mutual:
Males: 15.2%, Females: 8.6%