

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Civilian

Parent-Child Aggression, Adult-Partner Violence, and Child Outcomes: A Prospective, Population-Based Study

Maneta, E. K., White, M., & Mezzacappa, E. (2017). Parent-child aggression, adult-partner violence, and child outcomes: A prospective, population-based study. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 68, 1-10. doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.03.017

SUMMARY: It is important to understand the negative effects of domestic violence on child outcomes. This population-based study interviewed the primary caregiver of 2,810 children aged three, six, or nine years old. Each caregiver was interviewed three times in three-year intervals about their child's exposure to domestic violence (i.e., parent-child physical aggression and intimate partner violence) and child outcomes (i.e., internalized and externalized symptoms). Results revealed that both types of domestic violence were related to the development of negative child outcomes.

KEY FINDINGS:

- Children who were victims of parent-child physical aggression were likely to develop externalizing symptoms, whereas children exposed to intimate partner violence were likely to development internalizing symptoms.
- Parent-child physical aggression had more negative effects on child outcomes than intimate partner violence.
- Children who were not exposed to parent-child physical aggression or intimate partner violence experienced an increase of internalizing symptoms and a decrease of externalizing symptoms during the nine years.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MILITARY PROFESSIONALS:

Military professionals could:

- Assess for both parent-child physical aggression and intimate partner violence in military families
- Attend training about domestic violence to increase ability to identify risk factors for domestic violence in military families

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Offer child maltreatment preventative services that can support Service members who are new parents
- Develop parenting and marriage workshops that aim to promote family well-being and decrease the chance of domestic violence

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Encourage awareness campaign on military bases regarding the negative effects of both parent-child physical aggression and intimate partner violence on child outcomes
- Recommend professional development for professionals working with military families to identify the presence of risk factors for domestic violence

This product is the result of a partnership funded by the Department of Defense between the Office of Military Community and Family Policy and the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture through a grant/cooperative agreement with The University of Minnesota.



Putting Research to Work for Military Families



METHODS

- Participants were recruited from a large Midwest city that represented a population-based sample; the method of recruitment and the recruiting criteria were not specified.
- Each child's primary care giver (in 98% of the case it was the child's biological mother) was interviewed three times in three-year intervals. Interview measures assessed parent-child physical aggression, intimate partner violence, child outcomes, and socioeconomic status.
- Data were analyzed to examine the associations between domestic violence and child outcomes.

PARTICIPANTS

- Participants were 2,810 children (50% male) between three and nine years old at time one. The average age of the sample was not reported.
- Most children were Latino (48%) and Black (34%); the race/ethnicity of the remaining 18% of children was not reported.
- One tenth of children (10%) experienced parent-child physical aggression and 4% of children experienced intimate partner violence at all three time points of the study.

LIMITATIONS

- The study was solely based on children's primary caregiver's report, which may not fully represent children's experiences of domestic violence.
- Only self-report data were used in the study; therefore, the findings may be subject to social-desirability bias and memory bias.
- Most participants were Black and Latino, so caution must be taken to generalize the findings to other race/ethnicity groups.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Recruit participants from additional racial and ethnic backgrounds so that the results can be better generalized
- Collect both subjective (e.g., primary caregiver interviews) and objective data (e.g., child protection service records) to increase the reliability of the study
- Interview both fathers and mothers to get a more comprehensive view of children's experience of domestic violence

ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



For more information about the Assessing Research that Works rating scale visit:
<https://reachmilitaryfamilies.umn.edu/content/assessing-research-that-works>