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ATHLETICS AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: A STUDY OF RELATIONSHIP

A project based upon independent investigation, submitted in partial fulfillment for the Bachelor Degree of Arts in Social Work

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Abstract

This study looked to explore the correlation of violence and being a student athlete. The study was conducted at a small, private, Catholic college in the Northeastern part of the United States. There were 18 female participants and 24 male participants. The participants completed a 27 question survey pertaining to attitudes about violence against women. An independent T –test and a Pearson correlation was used. However, both tests proved the null hypothesis and the data proved not to be statistically significant. Yet, the negative reactions of the participants were significant. Research determined that more data and research is needed.

I. Introduction

A. Problem Formulation

1. Will as playing as a Division I male athlete more likely have negative attitudes toward dating violence?

B. Problem Justification

1. Negative attitudes may affect the way women are treated in relationships
2. Lack of attention given to dating violence
3. Implications and preventative measures for healthier relationships

II. Main Points

A. Definition of dating violence

1. Types of dating violence
2. Age groups affected
3. Prevalence of Dating Violence on College Campuses

B. College Athletics

1. Contact versus Non-contact sports
2. Violence in College Sports
3. Team versus Individual Sports
4. Athletic culture on Division I campuses

C. College Athletics and Violence Against Women

1. Acceptance of Rape Myths
2. Relationship between college athletics and dating aggression
3. The attitudes and acceptance of athlete's questionable behavior across college campuses.

III. Opposing Points

A. Hyper-sexualization of Women in the US

1. Athletics does not contribute to negative attitudes towards dating violence the media does

B. Consequences of hyper-sexualizing women

1. Affects attitudes of males and females about violence against women
2. Increases the prevalence of dating violence.

IV. Hypothesis

A. Male athletes are more likely to have accepting attitudes of dating violence versus non-athletes because of the violence and culture that surrounds DI college sports.

V. Methodology

A. Sample

1. Male and female student athletes and non athletes at Providence College, the University of Maine, and Belgium
2. Sample of Convenience

B. Data Gathering

C. Data Analysis

D. Findings

VI. Conclusion

A. Problem, what I found, and hypothesis
B. Implications
   1. More research on the subject could bring awareness to college dating violence
   2. Bring attention the attitudes of college males- which can be explored, addressed, and analyzed by professionals who have the resources for prevention and education
   3. More knowledge about violent tendencies and college athletics
   4. Consideration of the negative aspects of dating relationships.

The prevalence and severity of violence against women is increasingly apparent in today's society (McPhail & Stout, 1998, p.xiii). An important issue with violence against women is dating violence. Dating violence refers to any sexual, physical, and psychological abuse that occurs within a dating relationship. A dating relationship includes casual dating (i.e. one or two dates) or an extended dating relationship (Chung, 2007; Braithwaite, Fincham, Cui, & Pasley, 2008; Kaura &Lohman, 2007; McPhail & Stout, 1998). Previous dating violence research indicates a high level of prevalence; there are 5.3 million incidents of dating violence against women each year (Chung, 2007; Braithwaite, Fincham, Cui & Pasley, 2008). Additionally, dating violence is not only limited to more established intimate relationships, such as marriage and co-habitation (Braithwaite, Fincham, Cui, & Pasley, 2008). Disturbingly, in a study which sampled 425 undergraduate males at mid-western NCAA Division I college found that 18 percent of the men reported in engaging in some type of sexual aggression and 84 percent indicated that they engaged in verbally abusive aggression in dating relationships (Gidycz, Warketin, & Orchowski, 2007).

The prevalence of violence in college student dating relationships varies from 13 percent to 74 percent (Braithwaite, Fincham, Cui, & Pasley, 2008). However, the most consistent rates of dating violence for college women range from 20 to 30 percent (Daley & Noland, 2001; Spencer & Bryant, 2000; Zweig, Barber, & Eccles, 1997; Smith, Thompson, Tomaka,& Buchanan, 2005, as cited in Braithwaite, Fincham, & Pasley, 2008).

The problem of dating violence in college students is especially important to social work practice, policy, and research. First, the relationship between dating violence

in relationships among college students and intimate partner violence in martial relationships is very strong. Additionally, 30 percent of dating couples in college find themselves married to each other within 5 years (Sprecher, 1999 as cited in Braithwaite, Fincham, Cui, and Pasley, 2008). Social workers in any field can benefit from research in this area. All types of issues stem from dating violence- t hospital social workers, policy makers, legal advocates, college social workers, professors of social work, marriage counselors, psychoanalysts, independent clinical social workers, social workers in corrections, etc. All these areas of practice have individuals or policies that are affected by dating violence.

However, an increasingly disturbing issue within the subject of dating violence is the relationship between athletics and violence against women. In recent years, college athletics have been scrutinized for encouraging and perpetrating violence against women (Forbers, Adams-Curtis, Pakalka, & White, 2006). “Repeated stories in the popular media led to what appears to be the common belief that [male] athletes are more likely to be violent toward women than other males” (Crosset, 2002; Dabbs, 1998 as cited in Forbers, Adams-Curtis, Pakalka, & White, 2006,p. 442). Research suggests that there is a relationship between college athletics and dating aggression. Male college athletes are the cause and perpetrators in more violence cases than non-athletes; they report a higher rate of perpetration and acceptance of sexual aggression (Koss & Gaines as cited in Gidycz, Warkentin, & Orchowski, 2007). In a study by Frinter and Rubinson, male athletes only made up 2 percent of the population of their campus, yet male athletes were accused and involved in 20 percent of the reported cases of sexual assault, 14 percent of sexual abuse cases, and 11 percent of the battery cases (Leichliter, Meilman, Presley, & Cashin, 1998).

In total, male athletes were involved in 45 percent of violent cases on campus. Additionally, there is a significant relationship between participating in team sports and the acceptance of rape myths (Boringer, 1999; Sawyer, Thompson, & Chicorelli, 2002). The attitudes of males, athletes and non-athletes, toward dating violence are an important issue within the realm of college dating violence (Gidycz, Warketin, & Orchowski, 2007; Chung, 2007; Braithwaite, Fincham, Cui, & Pasley, 2008; Kaura &Lohman, 2007; McPhail & Stout, 1998). Both popular and professional conceptions of dating violence are completely misguided; they are unrealistic and idealized and there is almost a total neglect to the consideration of negative aspects of dating relationships, particularly dating violence (Makepeace, 1981).

Attitudes toward dating violence in male college athletes and non-athletes are important to social work, practice, policy, and research. Although there are known links between violent tendencies and athletics, there has been lack of research and awareness about this subject, In recent years there are increasing reports of college athletics and dating violence within the media (i.e. Duke University lacrosse players violent incident with a dancer, SJU basketball scandal, and University of Maine's basketball sex scandal). Additionally, it could bring attention to attitudes and behaviors of college males that may be predictors of violent behavior from athletes. Therefore, these athletes\may be able to be educated and more aware about this issue, which in turn may prevent them from bringing these behaviors with them to the professional leagues, where the stakes are higher and the intensity of the crimes grows exponentially. These attitudes can be explored, addressed, and analyzed by colleges and professionals who have the resources for prevention and education. Healthier attitudes can be cultivated and awareness can be

brought to the college population. Exploring this issue will make better equipped college counselors, professors, and coaches. Campus social workers can advocate for stronger punishments and more adequate rehabilitation for perpetrators. Hence, this research addresses the problem: Does playing as a Division I student athlete affect dating violence attitudes and are student athletes more likely to be perpetrators of violence?

Dating Violence

Dating violence refers to any sexual, physical, and psychological abuse that occurs within a dating relationship. A dating relationship includes casual dating (i.e. one or two dates) or an extended dating relationship (Chung, 2007; Braithwaite, Fincham, Cui, & Pasley, 2008; Kaura &Lohman, 2007; McPhail & Stout, 1998). In a recent study of college students, 34 percent of the students in dating relationships reported the occurrence of physical aggression in the relationship over the past year (Straus & Ramirez, 2002 as cited in Braithwaite, Fincham, Cui, & Pasley, 2008). It was found in college students relationships that dating violence can result in physical injury, medical attention seeking, psychological distress, low grade point average, disciplinary problems, and rapid repeat pregnancies (Makepeace, 1986; Coffey, Leitenberg, Henning, Bennet, & Jankowski, 1996; Reuterman & Burcky, 1989; Jacoby, Gorenflo, Black, Wunderlich, & Eyler, 1999 as cited in Braithwaite, Fincham, Cui, & Pasley, 2008). According to DeKeseredy (2000), there is considerable disagreement about what type of harmful dating violence behaviors should be included in defining dating violent relationships. “A growing number of researchers and government agencies contend that violence against women is multidimensional in nature and that definitions and research should recognize that many women’s lives rest on a continuum of unsafety or a continuum of violent

actions" (Stank, 1990; National Institute of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1996 as cited in DeKeseredy, 2000).

However, it is noted that psychological and emotional abuse can be more painful than physical or sexual abuse; yet some women simultaneously experience all different types of abuse (Okun, 1986; Saltzman, Fanslow, McMahon, & Shelley, 1999 as cited in DeKeseredy, 2000).

The prevalence of violence in college student dating relationships varies from 13 percent to 74 percent (Braithwaite, Fincham, Cui, & Pasley, 2008). However, the most consistent rates of dating violence for college women range from 20 to 30 percent (Daley & Noland, 2001; Spencer & Bryant, 2000; Zweig, Barber, & Eccles, 1997; Smith, Thompson, Tomaka,& Buchanan, 2005, as cited in Braithwaite, Fincham, & Pasley, 2008).Additionally, in the last decade, nearly one third of dating couples reported at least one violent episode in their relationship (Kaura &Lohman, 2007) .Braithwaite, Fincham, Cui, and, Pasley (2008) also state "it would be incorrect to believe intimate partner violence is limited to more established intimate relationships, such as marriage and cohabitation" (p. 260). Researchers give an example of a recent study of college students, in which 34 percent of the students in dating relationships reported the occurrence of physical aggression in the relationship over the past year (Straus & Ramirez, 2002 as cited in Braithwaite, Fincham, Cui, & Pasley, 2008).Therefore, it is important to recognize young women's experiences of dating violence. In a qualitative study on young women's experiences and understandings of dating violence it is stated female victims of male violence are understood in two ways through their own and other young women's explanations: " they are responsible for the violence because they have not

made good decisions about the men they date and 'choose' to stay with them…they are vulnerable to being victims because they have low self esteem or another personal inadequacy which is why they choose to stay in the relationship" (Chung, 2007, p. 1292). Unfortunately, both these explanations do not question the man's use of violence or his ability or lack thereof to change (Chung, 2007, p. 1292). Chung (2007) addresses dating violence's similarity to domestic violence. She states that "a …similarity to domestic violence is related to the tendency by some women to minimize their male partner's violence and excuse or justify his actions; additionally, young women tend to view dating violence as an individualized problem, not an expression of gender inequality" (Chung, 2007, p.1293).

College Athletics

Since the risen popularity of modern sports, it was to be believed that sports provide many benefits to those who participate in them; there are extreme amounts of empirical based evidence on this claim (Ewing, Gano-Overway, Branta, & Seefeldt, 2002 as cited in Forbes, Adams-Curtis, Paklka, & White, 2006). Throughout history, sports have been a mirror of our society, hence since violence in our society has grown exponentially the violence in sports has also increased (Smith, 1986 as cited in Lance & Ross, 2000). Researchers report the causes of sport violence reported by student athletes are: provocation, encouragement by coaches, peer pressure, wanting to win, implicit in the game played, revenge, and retaliation (Reilly, 1995; O'Brien & Wolf, 1996; Scher, 1993; Weinstein, et al., 1995; Pilz, 1996; Pooley & Golding, 1987 as cited in Lance & Ross, 2000). It is reported that violence is more likely to take place within college sports when more violence will make a difference between winning and losing, weak officials,

loose sanctions, coaches having little control over their team members, or encouragement from coaching staff to break rules (Clark, 1981 as cited in Lance & Ross, 2000). In general and especially in college sports, the competitors often cater to their audience, meaning violence may be used to please the fans and to obtain media coverage (Lance & Ross, 2000). Additionally, researchers report that if "violence in sports is condoned in the media; sport violence is more likely to occur" (Lance & Ross, 2000).

It has been noted that athletes and sports vary immensely in their level of aggression and misogyny (Crosset, 2002 as cited in Forbes, Adams-Curtis, Paklka, & White, 2006). Sports like football have been described as a "male initiation rite and bastion of misogynistic sexism" (Sabo & Pamepinto, 1990; Nelson, 1994 as cited Forbes, Adams-Curtis, Paklka, & White, 2006). However, it seems unlikely that sports like track, golf, and figure-skating would be described the same as football. It is reported that "sexual violence against women varies greatly among universities and is much more common among some athletic groups and fraternities than others" (Humprehy & Kahn, 2000; Sanday, 1996a, as cited in Forbes, Adams-Curtis, Paklka, & White, 2006). For example, "the examination of the values associated with highly aggressive sports, such as football and hockey, quickly identifies features that may be associated with violence against women" (Forbes, et. al., 2006, p. 443). According to researchers, "the similarities between these values and the values of rape-prone societies or institutions are striking (Forbes, et. al., 2006, p. 443). Extensive reviews of literature consistently shows the relationship between these variables and "violence against women, sexual coercion, and rape(Forbes, et. al., 2006, p. 443). Additionally, research suggests that athletes have greater rates of psychological maladjustment in comparison to their non-athlete peers

(Storch, Storch & Killiany, 1997). Meaning individual problems could have an effect on a college athletic team.

Furthermore, on many college campuses there is an athletic "culture" that may foster a predisposition to violence and violent attitudes. In comparisons to non-athletes, both male and female athletes consumed significantly more alcohol and engaged in more binge drinking (Leichliter, Meilman, Presely, & Cashin, 1998). Research supports the hypothesis that "athletes are more likely to engage in deleterious alcohol consumption." In a study that surveyed 216 students at a Mississippi institution, the athletes surveyed consumed significantly more alcohol per occasion than non athletes (Leichliter, Meilman, Presley, & Cashin, 1998). Additionally, college athletes are more likely to exhibit high risk behaviors such as: driving under the influence of alcohol, having more sexual partners, contracting more STDs, and engaging in more sexual violence than their non athletic counterparts (Leichliter, Meilman, Presley, & Cashin, 1998).

College Athletics and Violence Against Women

The relationship between sports participation and aggression against women will be stronger at some schools than others. For example, at NCAA Division I schools there may a stronger relationship between college athletics and violence against women because these schools have "numerous athletic scholarships, athletic dorms, large revenues from sports, nationally ranked teams than at smaller schools where athletes are better integrated into the student body and sports are far less visible, prestigious, and income producing

Male college athletes are the cause and perpetrators in more violence cases than non-athletes; they report a higher rate of perpetration and acceptance of sexual aggression

(Koss & Gaines as cited in Gidycz, Warkentin, & Orchowski, 2007). In a study by Frinter and Rubinson, male athletes only made up 2 percent of the population of their campus, yet male athletes were accused and involved in 20 percent of the reported cases of sexual assault, 14 percent of sexual abuse cases, and 11 percent of the battery cases (Leichliter, Meilman, Presley, & Cashin, 1998). In total, male athletes were involved in 45 percent of violent cases on campus. In recent years, college athletics have been scrutinized for encouraging and perpetrating violence against women (Forbers, Adams-Curtis, Pakalka, & White, 2006). “Repeated stories in the popular media led to what appears to be the common belief that [male] athletes are more likely to be violent toward women than other males” (Crosset, 2002; Dabbs, 1998 as cited in Forbers, Adams-Curtis, Pakalka, & White, 2006,p. 442). In recent years there are increasing reports of college athletics and dating violence within the media (i.e. Duke University lacrosse players’ violent incident with a dancer, SJU basketball scandal, and University of Maine’s basketball sex scandal). However, it is important that some researchers suggest that, participation in college sports may definitely reinforce preexisting attitudes, yet “hostility towards women, objectification of women, admiration of violence, and other attitudes associated with aggression against women” may be acquired long before the athletes reach the college level (Forbers, Adams-Curtis, Pakalka, & White, 2006)

The attitudes toward and acceptance of athlete’s questionable behavior across college campuses may be caused by many reasons. A study done on a Division I basketball team and loyalty in college athletics found that college teams generate an “intense loyalty that surpasses the more bland forms of organizational commitment found in ordinary organizations (Adler & Adler,1988). Other organizations that can compare to

this type of loyalty are religious cults and combat units(Adler & Adler,1988). This type of intense loyalty may explain why athletic organizations develop “don’t ask, don’t tell” policies about different indiscretions involving their players (i.e. sexual assaults, dating violence, etc). These athletic organizations also “engage in controlling extra organizational behavior, which makes there members more easily susceptible to evoke intense loyalty.” This leads to domination over all the members and members will subordinate all other interests to the athletic organization (Adler & Adler,1988). For example, a coach in one study sought to limit the athletes interaction and time with other relationships (Adler & Adler,1988). Additionally, Division I college athletes have a degree of status across college campuses. According to Jackson & Davis (2000), athletes hold a “special” place in society. They are viewed as role models, heroes, and occasionally villains (Jackson & Davis, 2000). Especially on college campuses, athletes have extremely high and intense public exposure, which may cause more opportunities for athletes to have a high performance in the “heterosocial arena” (Jackson & Davis, 2000). For example, male student athletes are expected to not only “score” on the field, but to also score when it comes to dating and sexual escapades (Jackson & Davis, 2000). Some research notes that student athletes “often brag with one another about their sexual conquests or ‘notches on the bedpost’” (Jackson & Davis, 2000). Furthermore, in NCAA Division I schools it is recognized that student athletes have many more privileges than non-athletes, not limited to but including scholarships and housing (Jackson & Davis, 2000). Also there is a greater potential for charges not be filed in high-profile sexual assault and domestic violence cases against college athletes for reasons like prosecutors that are tied to university politics and want to apply non-criminal solutions to a criminal

act, powerful alumni, high profile or famous fans, etc (Jackson & Davis, 2000). Finally, researchers found that because athletes were not penalized for their violent actions, it was more likely that non- athletes were not penalized for their actions(Jackson & Davis, 2000).. In essence, the athletics are lowering the bar for other non-athletic perpetrators, which is extremely disturbing.

Athletics Promote Positive Behaviors

In accordance with experts and popular belief sports participation is believed to promote positive behaviors (Pate, Trost, Levin, & Dowda, 2000). Athletics are believed to provide youth with a healthy prosocial environment which fosters positive behaviors that are considered core values in society (Pate, Trost, Levin, & Dowda, 2000). A significant portion of research has specified that "sports participation is also associated with psychological well-being, positive social development, and higher academic and occupational achievement through young adulthood"(Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001; Brunelle, Danish, & Forneris, 2007; Gore, Farrell,
& Gordon, 2001 as cited in Zarrett, N., Fay, K., Li, Y., Carrano, J., Phelps, E., & Lerner, R. , 2009). These values include but are not limited to fair play, competitiveness, teamwork, and achievement (Pate, Trost, Levin, & Dowda, 2000). Also, sports participation cultivates positive developmental trajectories because youths who participate in these sports learn values and skills associated with "initiative, responsibility, social cohesion, persistence, and self-control (Kleiber & Kirshnit, 1991;Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006 as cited in Zarrett et. al, 2009). Additionally athletics promotes physical health because involvement in them involves physical activity, training, and exercise; team rules also have certain nutrition rules that may aid in

promoting positive behaviors (Pate, Trost, Levin, & Dowda, 2000). For example, a college football team may enforce a “dry season” which means no alcohol is allowed to be consumed for the whole entire season. Additionally some research states that, “differences remain between student-athletes and the general student body with student-athletes displaying greater levels of academic engagement and graduation rates” (Ferris, Finster, & McDonald, 2004; Umbach, Palmer, Kuh, & Hannah, 2006 as cited in Clopton, Ryan & Finch, 2009). Also, “student-athletes were found to possess higher levels of sense of community” (Clopton, 2008 as cited in Clopton, Ryan & Finch, 2009). This depicts that being athlete and part of team promotes the sharing of social capital and allows the individual to trust and have a sense of community which is important to psycho-social development (Clopton, Ryan & Finch, 2009).

Media Promotes Negative Attitudes towards women

In all sorts of media outlets including television, movies, and magazines, the media promotes violence and negative attitudes toward women. Sexist and stereotypical images of women are conveyed to the American public through all sorts of channels (Hall & Crum, 1994). Extensive research was conducted on the different types of negative messages depicted through these various media advertising outlets. These researchers found four basic themes “women are usually depicted in the traditional homemaker role, women do not make important decisions, women need men for everything- protection, money, and wisdom, and women are viewed as sex objects and decoration with no personalities” (Courtney & Whipple, 1983 as cited in Hall & Crum, 1994). In mass media, when sexual violence is portrayed there is frequently the subtle suggestion that the

victim secretly desires the assault and derives pleasure from it (Malamuth & Briere, 1986).

Another form of media that promotes violent and negative attitudes towards women is pornography. Pornography is extremely prevalent and available everywhere possible- gas stations, convenience stores, and bookstores. Pornography has a large influence on the promotion of negative attitudes towards women because of its far reaching influence, availability and wide readership (Mcphail & Stout, 1998). According to the National Research bureau, 52 million people world wide are being exposed to mainstream pornography (McPhail & Stout, 1998). Pornographic materials indicate to the individual that womens' real experiences with violence and sexism is "sexualizing power imbalances" which in turn fosters negative attitudes toward women (McPhail & Stout, 1998). It is stated that "pornography institutionalizes the sexuality that both embodies and enacts male supremacy" (McPhail & Stout, 1998). This depicts that many forms of violence against women are linked with each other and it becomes a continuum of violence (Mcphail & Stout, 1998).

Music is another media outlet that promotes negative attitudes towards women. For example, "gangsta rap music is often identified with misogynist lyric portrayals" (Armstrong, 2001). Twenty-two percent of gangsta rap music songs contain lyrics that portray violence against women. It is stated that linguistic violence is in fact a form of violence against women (Armstrong, 2001). In certain rap songs "intimate relationships are riddled with violence" (Armstrong, 2001). In a "Geto Boys" song, a man's partner gets physically punished if she talks to another man and they also handle a false accusation of paternity by breaking the woman's neck (Armstrong, 2001). The group

N.W.A (Niggaz Wit Attitude) state specific procedures for the rape of a fourteen year old girl: “Punch the bitch in the eye/then the ho will fall to the ground…then you open up her mouth/put your dick, and move the shit around” (NWA,1991 as cited in Armstrong, 2001). It seems that gangsta rap music is a celebration or supporting voice of rape and rape culture (Armstrong, 2001). It is the cultural norm in American society. Society even goes as far as glorify these verbal rapists. For example, rapper Eminem as “a reward for extending the presence of violent and misogynist lyrics beyond his musical progenitors” has been featured on the covers of nationally read magazines like *Rolling Stone*, *The Source*, and *Spin* (Armstrong, 2001). However, rap is not the only genre to show support for violence against women. Rock lyrics often support male domination over women and rock has misogynist imagery throughout its lyrics (Pattison, 1987; Levine, 1992 as cited in Armstrong, 2001).

Consequences of Media Violence Against Women

Many feminist writers contend that mass media “violent sexuality has undesirable effects on attitudes and behavior” (Malamuth & Check, 1981). According to a wide range of recent studies, a quarter of women located in North America have been raped or sexually assaulted at one point in their lives (Brickman & Briere, 1984; Hall & Flannery, 1984; Russell, 1983 as cited in Malamuth & Briere, 1986). Additionally, it is reported that “half of all female college students have experienced some form of male aggression” (Kanin & Parcell, 1977 as cited in Malamuth & Briere, 1986). In a study by Malamuth (1981), it was found that repeatedly exposing male subjects to pornography resulted in the males “self-generating rape fantasies” (Malamuth & Check, 1981). In a research study it was found that the more college men read sexually explicit magazines the more

they thought the women enjoyed forced sex (Malamuth & Briere, 1986). This exposure increases male acceptance of rape myths, therefore generating negative attitudes toward women (Malamuth & Check, 1981).

Women themselves experience the negative effects of the violence promoted in the media internally and externally. Many women experience "internalized oppression" (McPhail & Stout, 1998). Internalized oppression occurs when the victims of oppression (i.e. violence against women in the media) are "led to belief the negative beliefs of their group which is espoused by the oppressor" (McPhail & Stout, 1998). In todays misogynistic society women learn to hate themselves, they are taught to feel inferior to men (McPhail & Stout, 1998). From this violence women can internally experience depression, body image issues, and other mental health problems (McPhail & Stout, 1998). Externally, women definitively experience the dire consequences of violence against women promoted in the media; physical violence being the most obvious external effect. In the United States alone, "two million women are physically assaulted by their partners each year" (Straus & Gelles as cited by Parrot & Zeichner, 2003). One third of female college students experience sexual dating violence victimization (Murray, Wester, & Paladino, 2008). Women are more likely to be viewed as objects rather than people (McPhail & Stout, 1998).

Another Factor that Promotes Violence Against Women

Although the promotion of negative attitudes towards women has exponentially grown because of the media, there are other factors that promote violence against women. There are two factors that are big players in the violence continuum. One of these factors is trait anger. Different studies have concluded that men that are violent towards their

partners display more anger than nonviolent married men (Parrot & Zeichner, 2003). Parrot and Zeichner (2003) found that trait anger depict the frequency of physical assaults in dating relationships. Additionally it was found that men who experience extreme levels of anger are a part of high risk group in pertaining to displays of physical aggression towards their partners, these men possess a strong tendency to use violence against women compared to those who do not experience intense levels of anger (Parrot & Zeichner, 2003).

Hypothesis

From the discussions and statistics above, one can see that dating violence is prevalent in the lives of college students across the country. Some perspectives allege that the environment and culture of college athletics contribute to the violence. Others blame the media and genetics. One thing on which most agree is college dating violence in is a major issue and endangers the social, mental, and physical health of women. Therefore, an investigation will attempt to determine whether PC athletic participation has an influence on violent behaviors towards women.

Methodology

This study is a quantitative, descriptive exploratory study that will look at the attitudes of athletes and non-athletes in relation to dating violence at a small college in the Northeast. In addition, the study will look at other factors that may contribute to negative attitudes towards dating violence.

Participants

The potential subjects were male and female students at Providence College that are currently enrolled as matriculated students. The college is a northeastern school with ninety-two percent of their students originates from the northeastern United States. Sixty-

eight percent of the students are from the New England area. Sixty-three percent of the students are on financial assistance. The percentage of minority student attending the college is 9.8 percent.

This is a sample of convenience, a non-random, non probability sample; the questionnaire was distributed door to door. In addition to handing the questionnaire out door to door organizations, snowball sampling was also used in asking the subjects to also pass out the survey. The sample included 42 participants.

Data Gathering

Data was gathered by the use of a survey which will measure the percentage of dating violence (Appendix A). The survey consists of twenty-seven statements which students rate with a like Likert scale. To ensure total privacy and confidentiality, a consent form was attached in front of the survey (Appendix B). There were (?) women and (?)men participants. In total there were 100 participants.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, descriptive statistics and independent sample T-test were used. The question of participation in athletics and comparisons between non-athletes, varsity athletes, and intramural athletes were addressed and comparisons of the sex, athletic participation status of the subjects, and their answers to the survey were analyzed. In addition, there is exploration of the correlation between the subjects' answers on the survey and hypothesis of what exactly affects negative attitudes towards women.

Findings

The research was guided by the questions: (a) Does athletic participation encourage negative attitudes towards dating violence? (b)What are students' attitudes about dating violence? (c) What do their actions reveal about dating violence on campus?

In analyzing the data, tests of bi-variate correlation were used. The tests chosen were the Pearson correlation and Spearman's Rhoe. The variables compared were if the participant was involved in athletics and a composite variable of violence. The composite variable of violence included the statements: "I drink alcohol regularly (i.e. once a week or more)"; "When drinking I become angry"; Have you ever been involved in a relationship that was violent**?"; "It is acceptable to hit your partner if they do something wrong"; "It is appropriate to hit your partner anytime you want" ;"It normal to pressure your partner to have sex"; "Calling your partner a slut is appropriate if he/she cheated on you. It is normal to insult and put your partner down in front of others";"Restricting your partner from going to different places (i.e. bars and clubs) is reasonable";"Calling your partner foul names (i.e. bitch, slut, jackass, etc.) is reasonable especially if you think they deserve it" ;"Checking your partners' email/texts without their knowledge is reasonable behavior"; "It is important that you make all/most of the decisions in the relationship"; "Your partner should not have other friends"; "It is appropriate to threaten your partner to get what you want." Table A and B illustrate the results.

Table A

			State if you are involved in college varsity and/or intramural athletics	violence
Spearman's rho	State if you are involved in college varsity and/or intramural athletics	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.068
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.334
		N	42	42
	violence	Correlation Coefficient	-.068	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.334	.
		N	42	42

Table B		State if you are involved in college varsity and/or intramural athletics	violence
State if you are involved in college varsity and/or intramural athletics	Pearson Correlation	1	-.092
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.281
	N	42	42
violence	Pearson Correlation	-.092	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.281	
	N	42	42

Both tables show that the data is not statistically significant with a negative correlation. Thus, proving the null hypothesis, varsity athletes do not exhibit more violent tendencies. However, I used the violence variable and performed an independent sample T-Test shown in Table C and compared males and females using the variables of violence.

Table C

	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
violence	Male	24	41.2500	6.10951	1.24710
	Female	18	37.8333	4.31482	1.01701

The higher the mean, the closer the propensity to violence- the mean scores of males proved to be higher than females showing that the males may be more likely to have violent attitudes towards women.

Conclusion

This research addressed the problem: Does playing as a Division I student athlete affect dating violence attitudes and are student athletes more likely to be perpetrators of violence? The hypothesis inferred that athletic participation may have an effect on dating violence. Instead the null hypothesis was proved and the findings theoretically proved that student althletes are not more likely to be perpetrators of violence, but in fact are less likely to be perpetrators of violence.

Limitations

This study was conducted at a small, private, Catholic college in the Northeast. This school leaves much to be desired when it comes to ethnic and economic diversity –

which may or may not have made a difference in the study. Additionally, the sample size was very small, which likens the study to not be relatable to the public. Also, the author of this study had problems getting some Varsity athletes to participate in the survey. Some said that they thought it was “dumb,” “waste of time.” Others politely declined. It was also difficult for the author to locate the Varsity athletes because of the vigorous schedules of the students. The study may have worked better through an online survey, because of the sensitive information that the surveys may or may not have revealed. Although, the survey was anonymous the participant s\may have felt more comfortable turning it in on the internet.

Implications of Research

This study is important has serious implication for college women, men and the college institution itself. This type of research provides information to the college itself about what is happening on campus. Most importantly, this study educates and increases awareness about violence against women and what is happening with our athletic programs. The research also implicates that there is a need for education of violence on the College Campus. Many participants commented that the survey was violent and was unrealistic for the men and women on this campus. This type of negative reactions may be indicative of an underlying apathetic sentiment on campus, which must be explored.

Future Directions for Research

Much more research is needed on the subject of college dating violence. According to scholars, “several gaps have been identified in the literature” (Murray & Kardatzke, 2007, p. 84). Some researcher identify that “research is need to examine the reasons college men are often hesitant to participate in programs that counter dating

violence" (DeKeseredy et al, 2000, as cited in, Murray & Kardatzke, 2007, p.84). Other researchers suggest that the use of, "longitudinal and experimental designs in the study of college student dating violence" (Lewis & Fremouw, 2000, as cited in Murray & Kardatzke, 2007, p. 84). Moreover increased efforts are needed to "identify effective assessment strategies, to determine counseling strategies that increase the likelihood that clients who have experienced dating violence will report those experiences, and to identify effective interventions to treat co-occurring dating violence and psychological symptoms" (Murray & Kardatzke, 2007, p.85). On a local level, at Providence College, the mentioned recommendations should be put into action. Various groups on campus should collaborate on this level. Administration, residence life, and the counseling center, and various special interest clubs such as Women Will, Organization of Student Social Workers, and Amnesty International should collaborate about spreading awareness about such a prominent issue on college campuses. Workshops, information sessions and literature should be widely available on PC's campus. The Social Work department could dedicate some of its time to further educate students on the subject. In addition, the "Violence Against Women" class the Social Work Department offers should be mandatory on for all students attending the college.

As for the athletics aspect of the issue, coaches could run workshops on violence against women and enforce stricter punishments for any acts of violence (i.e. team suspension). Athletes could also be required to attend certain events like "Take Back the Night). Additionally, much more research is needed in this area. There is a deficiency of research on a correlation between athletics and dating violence. In order to make any headway in this area, social work researchers must take an interest and do deeper studies

on this subject. As stated earlier, about 20 to 30 percent of college students on average are in a violent dating relationship. Hence, this is a very serious issue that is developing into an epidemic that is raging across college campuses and must be properly addressed.

Appendix A

Sex:
Age:
Class Year:
Major:
State if you are involved in college varsity and/or intramural athletics:
State the sport:

Please circle the number that you agree with and please be as accurate and honest as possible.

1. I drink alcohol regularly (i.e. once a week or more).

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

2. When drinking I become angry.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. I believe that sports are beneficial.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. College athletes have more perks than non-athletes (perks- better class schedules, paid for textbooks, easier teachers, etc.)

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. Have you ever been involved in a relationship that was violent**?

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree

** Violence can be defined as any physical (i.e. slapping, grabbing), sexual (i.e. coerced sex) , or psychological abuse (name calling, controlling behavior

6. It is acceptable to hit your partner if they do something wrong.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5

Strongly Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Disagree Agree

7. It is appropriate to hit your partner anytime you want.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5

Strongly Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Disagree Agree

8. It normal to pressure your partner to have sex.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5

Strongly Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Disagree Agree

9. Forced sex between people dating is not rape.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5

Strongly Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Disagree Agree

10. When I drink I become happy.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5

Strongly Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Disagree Agree

11. Calling your partner a slut is appropriate if he/she cheated on you.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5

Strongly Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Disagree Agree

12. It is normal to insult and put your partner down in front of others.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5

Strongly Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Disagree Agree

13. Restricting your partner from going to different places (i.e. bars and clubs) is reasonable.

1----------2----------3----------4----------5
Strongly Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Disagree Agree

14. Checking your partners' email/texts without their knowledge is reasonable behavior.
1----------2----------3----------4----------5
Strongly Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Disagree Agree

15. Calling your partner foul names (i.e. bitch, slut, jackass, etc.) is reasonable especially if you think they deserve it.
1----------2----------3----------4----------5
Strongly Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Disagree Agree

16. It is important that you make all/most of the decisions in the relationship.
1----------2----------3----------4----------5
Strongly Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Disagree Agree

17. Your partner should not have other friends.
1----------2----------3----------4----------5
Strongly Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Disagree Agree

18. It is appropriate to threaten your partner to get what you want.
1----------2----------3----------4----------5
Strongly Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Disagree Agree

19. I believe sports are detrimental to character.
1----------2----------3----------4----------5
Strongly Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree Disagree

20. I want my significant other to have lots of friends besides myself.
1----------2----------3----------4----------5
Strongly Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree Disagree

21. College athletes have no advantages over regular students.
1----------2----------3----------4----------5
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

22. Equality is important in relationships with significant others.
1----------2----------3----------4----------5
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

23. Pressuring a partner to have sex is always inappropriate.
1----------2----------3----------4----------5
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

24. Privacy is very important and checking a partner's email, phone, and Facebook is completely wrong and never should be done.
1----------2----------3----------4----------5
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

25. You should never threaten or call your partner foul names even if you think they deserve it.
1----------2----------3----------4----------5
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

26. I often black out when I drink.
1----------2----------3----------4----------5
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

27. Forced Sex is rape
1----------2----------3----------4----------5
Strongly Disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly Agree

Appendix B

Dear Student Participant,

I am a student under the direction of Dr. Susan Grossman in the Department of Social Work. I am conducting a research study to explore certain behaviors of athletes and non-athletes at Providence College.

Your participation will involve taking a short questionnaire**.** Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty. Your name will not be used, the study is completely anonymous.

If you have any questions concerning this research study, please contact me at 631-834-1668 or mmercur3@providence.edu.

Sincerely,

Meeghan Mercurio

* * * * * * *

I give my consent to participate in the above study. (Please Print)

_____

Signature

_____

Date

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