

Start Strong: Building Healthy Teen Relationships *Student Baseline Data*

Presented by

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Presenter Disclosures

■ **Stacey Cutbush**

- The following personal financial relationships with commercial relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:
 - ◆ “No relationships to disclose.”

Teen Dating Violence

- Teen Dating Violence (TDV)
 - defined as physical, sexual, or psychological/emotional violence within a dating relationship, as well as stalking
 - can occur in person or electronically
 - may occur between a current or former dating partner
 - Nearly 10% of high school students nationwide reported being physically hurt by a boyfriend or girlfriend in the past 12 months (CDC, 2011)
- Few studies have investigated teen dating relationships and violence among middle school students

Evaluation Overview

- As part of the *Start Strong* initiative, RTI is conducting an independent evaluation
- The *Start Strong* evaluation consists of a
 - Student Effectiveness evaluation
 - Teacher Effectiveness evaluation
 - Policy evaluation
- This presentation shares data only from the Student Effectiveness evaluation

Student Effectiveness Evaluation— Research Design

- Longitudinal quasi-experimental research design
- 8 participating middle schools
 - 4 *Start Strong* schools
 - ◆ Bridgeport, Los Angeles, Indianapolis (2 schools)
 - 4 comparison schools
 - ◆ Efforts made to identify comparable schools based on race/ethnicity, gender and % free/reduced lunch
- 4 waves of data collection
 - Wave 1 – Fall 2010 Wave 3 – Fall 2011
 - Wave 2 – Spring 2011 Wave 4 – Spring 2012
 - ◆ *Only Wave 1 data will be shared in this presentation*

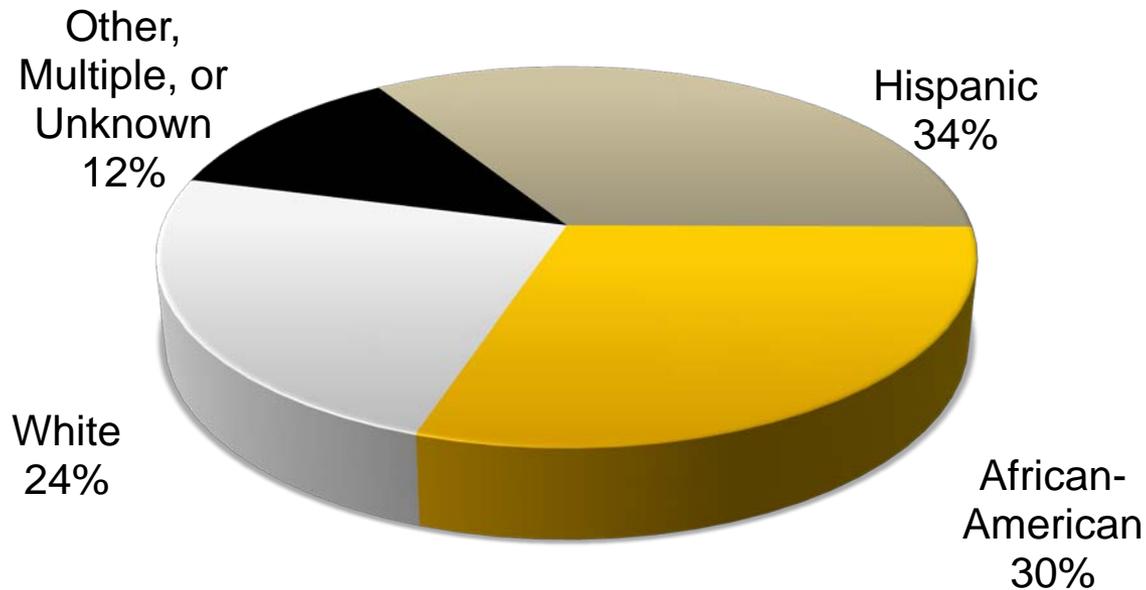
Data Collection and Study Sample

- 1,430 7th grade students from 8 schools in 4 states
 - 57% parent permission rate (range from 44%–71% across schools)
 - 96% survey completion rate among those with parent permission
- Data collected during the 2010-2011 school year
 - Paper-and-pencil questionnaires administered in groups at school

Participants

- Mean age = 12.3 years (SD = 0.56)
- 50.1% female

Percentages of Respondents in Each Racial/Ethnic Group



Measures

- Student reports on
 - TDV risk and protective factors, such as
 - ◆ Gender Stereotypes
 - ◆ Acceptance of TDV
 - ◆ Perceived Negative Consequences of TDV
 - ◆ Sexual Harassment
 - ◆ Peer Victimization or Perpetration of TDV
 - ◆ Witnessing Relationship Violence
 - ◆ Parent-Child Communication
 - TDV behaviors victimization and perpetration, including
 - ◆ Physical
 - ◆ Psychological
 - ◆ Electronic Aggression

Measures—TDV Behaviors

- Physical dating violence (Foshee et al., 1998)
 - Past 6-month perpetration ($\alpha = .90$) or victimization ($\alpha = .90$) each measured using 5 items, such as
 - ◆ Scratched or slapped them
 - ◆ Hit you with their fist or something else hard
 - Coded dichotomously: 1 or more times for any item(s) vs. none for all items

Measures—TDV Behaviors (*cont.*)

- Psychological dating abuse (Foshee et al., 1998)
 - Past 6-month perpetration ($\alpha = .90$) or victimization ($\alpha = .90$) each measured using 5 items, such as
 - ◆ Insulted them in front of others
 - ◆ Threatened to hurt you
 - Coded dichotomously: 1 or more times for any item(s) vs. none for all items

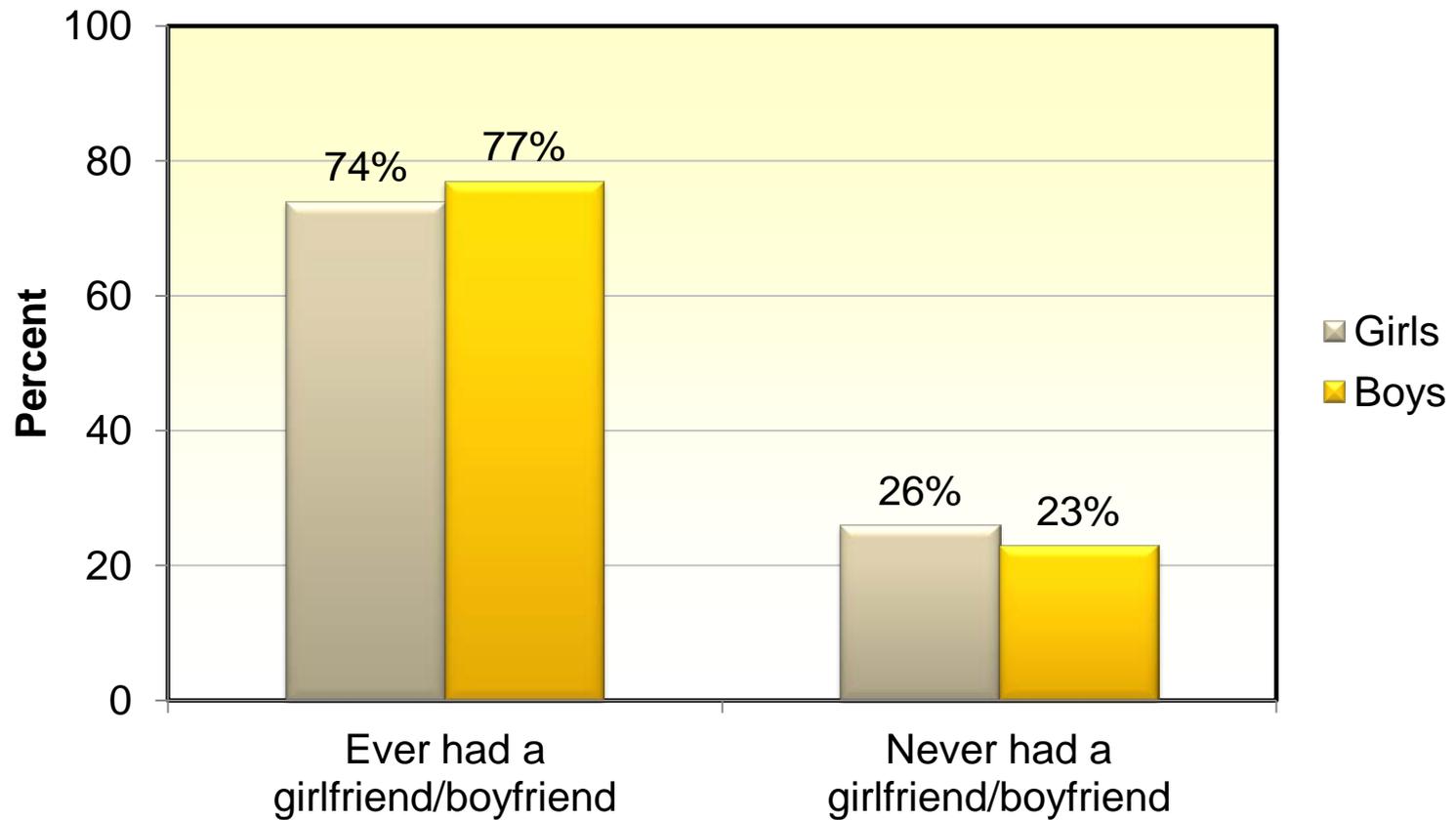
Measures—TDV Behaviors (*cont.*)

- Electronic dating aggression (Picard, 2007)
- Past 6-months perpetration ($\alpha = .86$) or victimization ($\alpha = .85$) each measured using eight items, including
 - Called you names, put you down, or said really mean things to you *using a cell phone, email, IM, texting, a blog, or a networking site like MySpace or Facebook*
 - Contacted you when you did not want them to, just to make you mad, *using a cell phone... Facebook*
- Coded dichotomously: 1 or more times for any item(s) vs. none for all items

Dating among 7th Graders

- Dating is common among the 7th graders in our sample
- 75% of students report ever having a boyfriend or girlfriend

Dating among 7th Graders



Baseline Data—Proximal Indicators

■ Gender stereotypes

- The large majority of students hold harmful gender stereotypes about the roles of males and females.
- Nearly two out of three students (63%) strongly agree with at least one gender stereotype, such as, “girls are always trying to get boys to do what they want them to do”, or “with boyfriends and girlfriends, the boy should be smarter than the girl.”

■ Negative consequences of TDV

- A sizeable minority of students do not strongly perceive there to be negative consequences from being violent towards a boyfriend or girlfriend.
- One in four students (26%) strongly disagree with statements about perceived negative consequences of teen dating violence, such as, “if I hit a boyfriend/girlfriend, she/he would break up with me.”

Baseline Data—Proximal Indicators *(cont.)*

■ Acceptance of TDV

- Students are far more likely to believe that it is acceptable for a girl to hit her boyfriend than for a boy to hit his girlfriend.
 - ◆ Half of students strongly agreed that it was okay for a girl to hit her boyfriend under certain circumstances, such as “a boy who makes his girlfriend jealous on purpose.”
 - ◆ Fewer than one in ten students (7%) strongly agreed that it was okay for a boy to hit his girlfriend under certain circumstances, such as “a girl who makes her boyfriend jealous on purpose.”

■ Sexual harassment victimization

- Being a victim of sexual harassment is common among the students in this sample.
- Nearly half of students (49%) report having been a victim of sexual harassment in the past six months, such as being “touched, grabbed, or pinched in a sexual way” or that someone “made sexual jokes” about them.

Baseline Data—Proximal Indicators *(cont.)*

■ Peers and teen dating violence

- Many students are aware of peers who have been victims of teen dating violence or who have been physically violent to their partners.
 - ◆ Nearly one in four students (24%) report having a male or female friend whose partner had been physically violent to them in the last 6 months.
 - ◆ More than one in five students (21%) report having a male or female friend who has been physically violent to a partner in the last 6 months.

■ Witnessing relationship violence

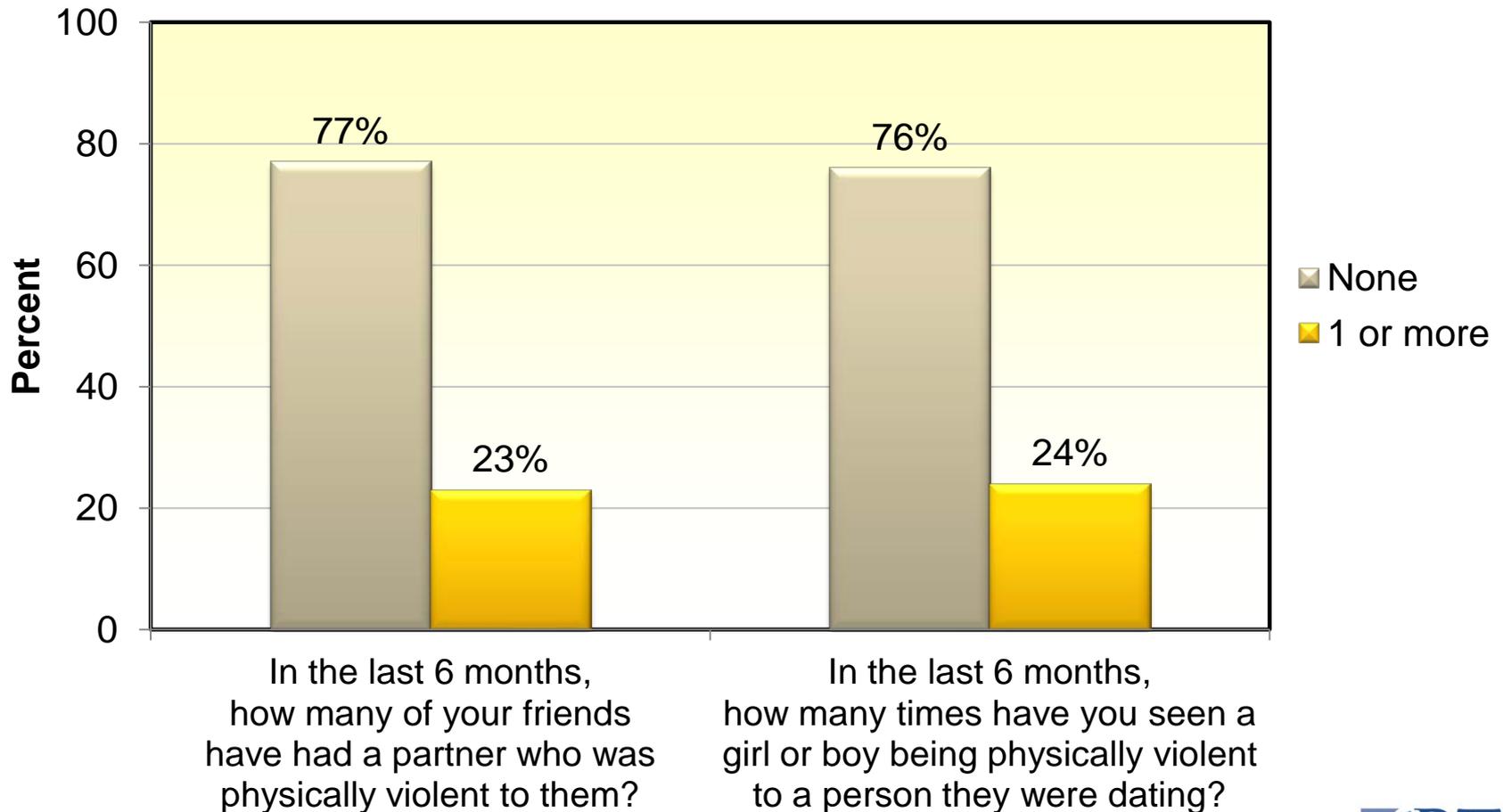
- It is common for students to have witnessed youth being violent to their dating partners.
- More than one in three students (37%) report having witnessed boys or girls being physically violent to persons they were dating in the last 6 months.

Baseline Data—Proximal Indicators *(cont.)*

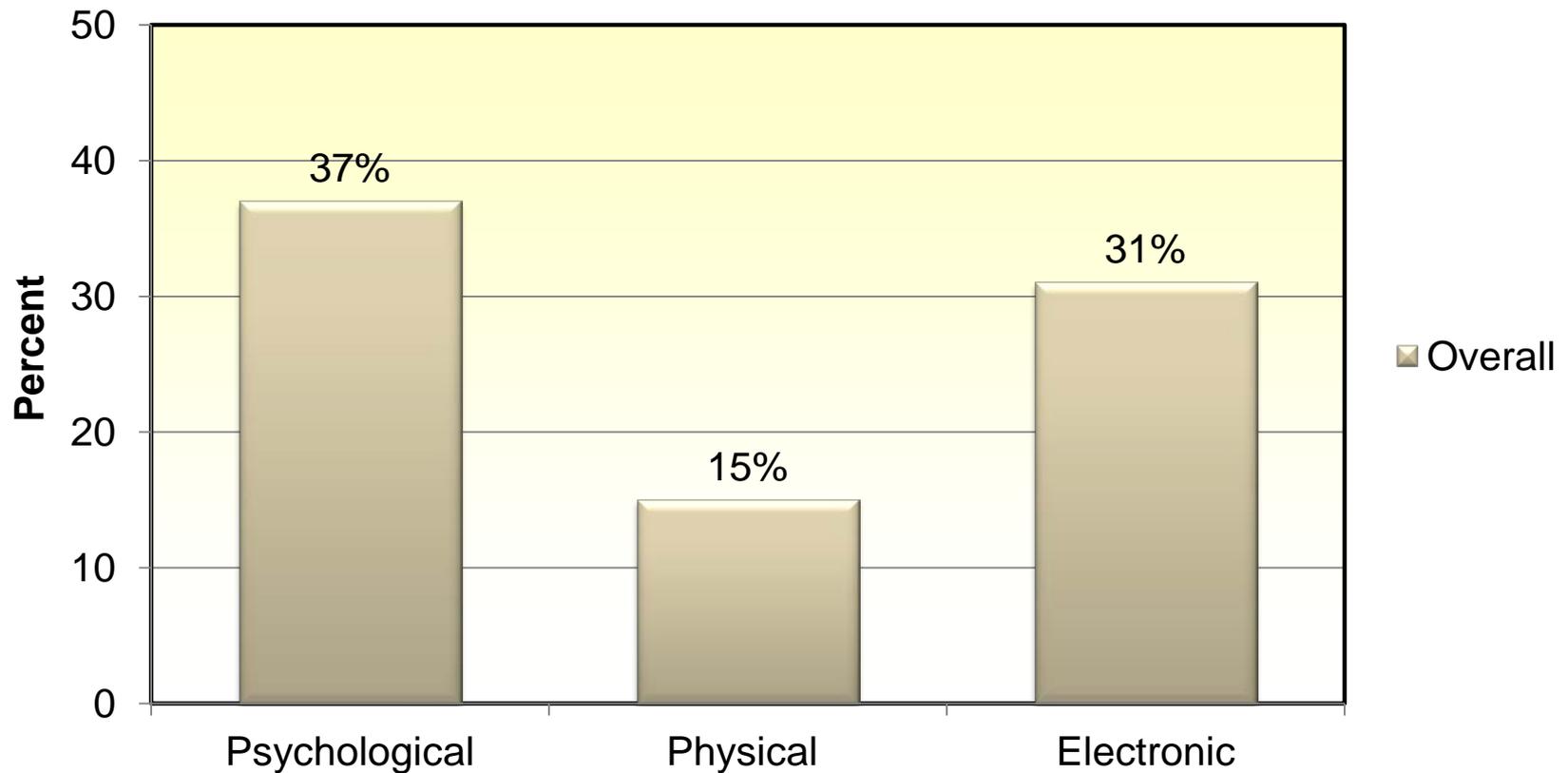
■ Parent-child communication

- Students are talking with their parents about dating and about social media in general.
- Nearly three-quarters of students report that, in the last 6 months, they “sometimes or often” talk with their parents about dating topics such as, “how to tell if someone might like you as a boyfriend or girlfriend.”
- Nearly half (47%) of students say that, in the last 6 months, they sometimes or often talk with their parents about using social media, such as “what kind of information is OK to put on your Facebook/MySpace about yourself.” Note that this statement does not refer to dating partners.

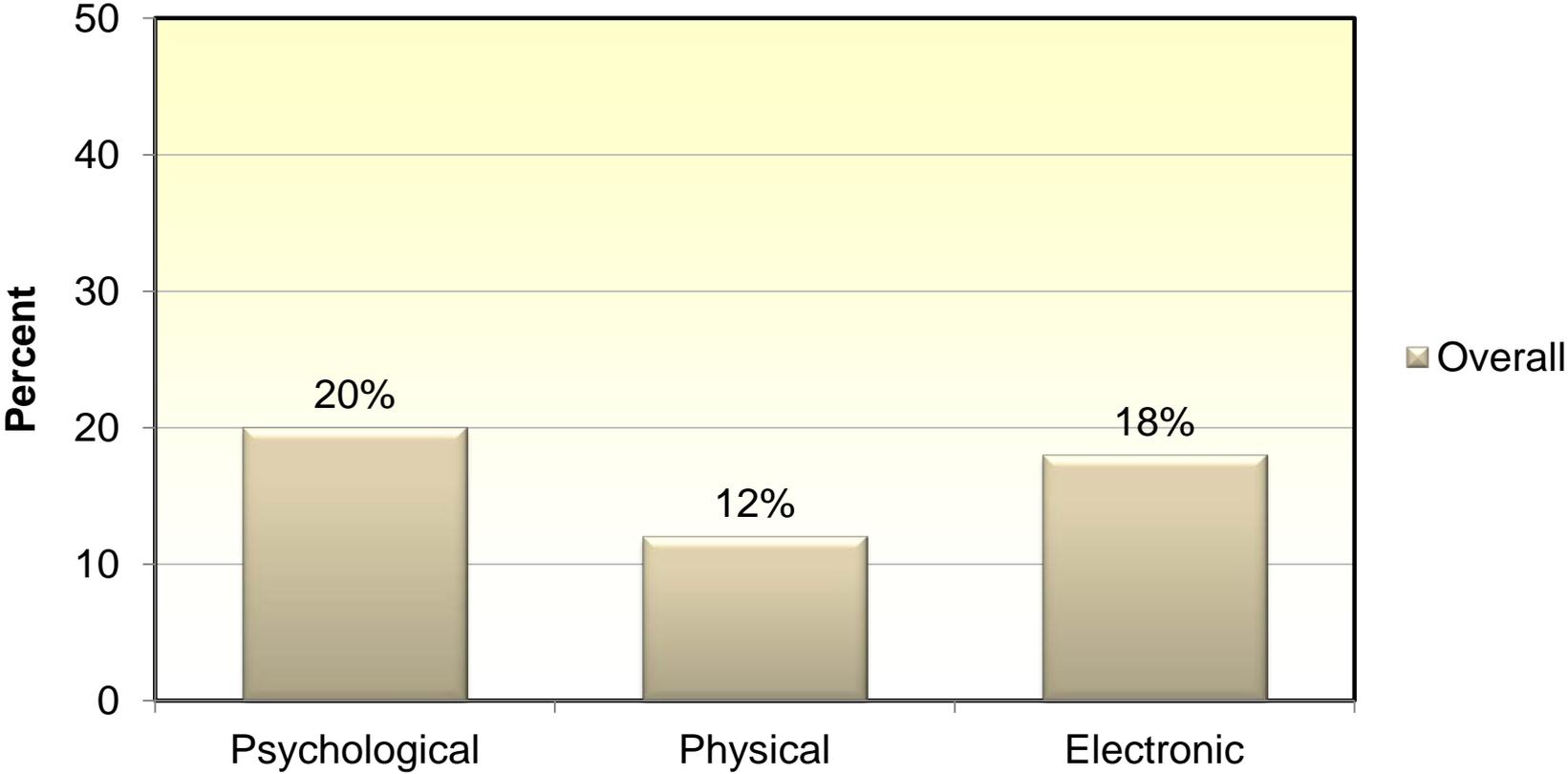
Peer Dating Violence Victimization and Witnessing Peer Dating Violence among 7th Graders



Teen Dating Violence: Victimization among 7th Graders



Teen Dating Violence: Perpetration among 7th Graders



Discussion

- Results show that the majority of middle school student had or currently have a boy/girlfriend
- Consistent with previous studies, our results show that physical, psychological/emotional, and electronic dating aggression among adolescent dating partners is common

Implications

- Incorporate health promotion programs into middle schools that are aimed at
 - Promoting healthy dating relationships
 - Preventing TDV
- Include TDV in existing policies about bullying, sexual harassment, and violence in schools and other settings
- Evaluate prevention programs to determine what approaches prevent or reduce TDV among middle school students

Limitations

- Convenience sample limits external generalizability
 - This is not a nationally representative sample
- Cross-sectional data prohibit causal inferences
- Self-report
 - Possible social desirability bias

Acknowledgements

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