

## Non-Medical Use of Prescription Drugs and Dating Violence: Together—a Toxic Combination

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Sexual and physical victimization of teens in high school is rising based on reports of dating violence. Also rising in prevalence is adolescent non-medical use of prescription drugs (NMUPD).

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Sexual and physical victimization of teens in high school is rising based on reports of dating violence. Also rising in prevalence is adolescent non-medical use of prescription drugs (NMUPD). What we don't know is how both of these activities associate with each other and whether such associations may differ by gender—at least until Clayton et al. ([10.1542/peds.2017-2289](#)) share their findings in a new study in our journal being released this week. The authors analyzed data from the

[2015 national Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#) and identified over 10,000 teens who had dated in the previous year. After controlling for many possible confounders, sexual and physical/sexual dating violence victimization (DVV) was associated with NMUPD in males and physical and physical/sexual DVV was associated with NMUPD in females.

What do these findings suggest in regard to what we can do to reduce the elevated DVV-NMUPD prevalence ratios reported in this study? We asked adolescent specialist Dr. Elizabeth Miller to weigh in with a thought-provoking commentary ([10.1542/peds.2017-3162](#)) in which she raises the possibility of bidirectional causality in these associations and suggests some things we should do to better educate our teen patients about the dangers of these associations. The best prescription we can offer readers in regards to the study and commentary are to read both of these articles and then share what you learn with the adolescents you care for, with the hope that in your community, the prevalence rates of NMUPD and DVV will start decreasing below the levels reported in the Clayton et al. study.

- [Dating Violence and Injury Among Youth Exposed to Violence](#)
- [Sexual Media and Childhood Well-being and Health](#)
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