

Intimate Partner Violence Victimization and Parenting Stress: Assessing the Mediating Role of Depressive Symptoms

Violence Against Women


15(11) 1380-1401

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DOI: 10.1177/1077801209346712

<http://vaw.sagepub.com>

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Abstract

Guided by the spillover hypothesis and process model of parenting, this study examined relationships between intimate partner violence (IPV) victimization and parenting characteristics among a sample of 1,153 lower-income women. Hierarchical regression was used to investigate a mediational model examining women's self-reports of physical and psychological IPV, depressive symptoms, and parenting stress. Results suggest that depressive symptoms partially mediate the link between a mother's psychological IPV victimization and later self-reported parenting stress. Findings from this study highlight the importance of including maternal psychopathology and other stress and support variables when assessing parenting outcomes among women with histories of IPV.

Keywords

domestic violence, intimate partner violence, parenting stress, relationship violence

Introduction

Are a woman's experiences of physical and psychological intimate partner violence (IPV)¹ victimization directly associated with increased parenting stress and decreased parental warmth or does depression mediate this relationship? The spillover hypothesis suggests that emotions and mood generated in a woman's adult intimate relationships will flow into and influence other significant (i.e., parent-child) relationships (Engfer, 1988). Two meta-analytic reviews documented support for the spillover hypothesis between interparental conflict and negative parenting (Erel & Burman, 1995; Krisknakumar & Buehler, 2000); yet women's complex roles as partners and parents need to be examined

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