

Using a Multidisciplinary Approach for a Multi-faceted Public Health Problem

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The Emory Center for Injury Control is a multi-university consortium dedicated to studying and preventing unintentional injuries and violence. A major goal of our Center is to transcend academic boundaries and disciplines to connect research to practice. As such, we are focusing our fourth special *Western Journal of Emergency Medicine* issue on multidisciplinary research.

In particular, this thematic issue provides innovative strategies for strengthening new research and adopting new practices that better incorporate injury prevention. For example, one study addresses the need to provide violence prevention strategies in trauma centers, underscoring how many of the youth seen in emergency departments are at increased risk for violence.¹ Similarly, there is a need to incorporate protection of vulnerable populations using new strategies and in broader settings. Self-Brown et al² make a case for including child maltreatment as part of broader disaster planning, and Strasser³ suggests that we address elder mistreatment through screening in legal assistance settings.

This issue contains research spanning the lifespan and in varied populations. For example, one study assesses the rates of intimate partner violence (IPV) among men who identify as gay or bisexual, as well as their perceptions of police helpfulness and next steps given their potential need for legal protection,⁴ while another study assesses individual relationship factors that modulate risk of IPV among men in a same-sex relationship.⁵ Goldammer et al⁶ focused on a younger population, investigating factors that influence the probability that a middle or high school student will intervene in a bullying situation, research that lays the groundwork for the development of effective bullying prevention programs. Also focusing on the adolescent population, a qualitative study by Kruger et al⁷ describes the perspectives of young girls at risk for sexual exploitation, including their experiences with building trusting relationships, peer aggression, sexuality, and sexual commodification in the world around them. Another study, by Barlament et al⁸, focuses on unintentional injury

prevention among adolescents, and highlights the disparity in seatbelt use among teens in rural areas, making a case for interventions that address this problem.

With respect to increasing the resources for violence prevention, one of the most powerful arguments we can make highlights the costs of violence to individuals and to our society at large. Roldós et al⁹ assess the economic burden of IPV in Ecuador and make a powerful argument against the asymmetry of the costs of violence versus the government resources allocated to this issue.

Finally, the editorial by Guedes¹⁰ makes a compelling case for integrating different forms of violence in research and practice; in particular the authors address the intersection between child maltreatment and IPV and provide a framework accompanying their key points. Similarly, the manuscript by Swahn et al¹¹ focuses on high school students, and examines the overlapping risk factors for violence against others with violence against oneself, as well as the overlap between violence and another important risk behavior – early alcohol-use initiation. These manuscripts point to a critical frontier in violence and injury research: the development of an understanding of how distinct forms of violence overlap and potentiate one another.

The research findings in this issue move the field of violence and injury research forward, using a multidisciplinary approach to develop an understanding of violence and injury prevention across the entire spectrum of human development.

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