Integrative Review of Cyber Dating Abuse in College Students

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Background

Young adults (age 18-30 years) are the most active Internet users in the United States, with online social experiences. Cyber dating abuse (CDA) is a complex intimate partner violence (IPV) nexus including, but not limited to, stalking, sexual harassment, psychological harm, or emotional harm perpetrated via technology. CDA encompasses abusive behaviors towards intimate partners carried out using an electronic medium. These behaviors can include sending threatening or harassing, messages, sharing explicit or private photographs, or monitoring intimate partners. CDA is particularly prevalent among adolescents and young adults, with up to 74.1% of college students reporting CDA.

Purpose

The purpose of this integrative review is to describe the current terminologies, theories, and measures regarding CDA among college students.

Methods

Searches of four databases (PubMed, PsycINFO, SocIndex, and Scopus) were conducted in consultation with a reference librarian. Inclusion criteria included: (1) data-based articles, (2) college students who were 18-26 years old, (3) a description of CDA behavior, (4) data on intimate partners, and (5) full text articles in English.

Main Results

In total, 493 articles were reviewed, and 36 met inclusion criteria. This review found no standard terminology to describe CDA. Researchers used terms, such as cyber aggression, digital dating abuse, and electronic aggression. Despite these different terminologies, two themes emerged: (1) inclusion of technology and (2) harassing intrusive and hostile comments. Researchers used theories related to crime, social learning, poly-victimization, and gender to explain the phenomenon of CDA. CDA measures varied in examining perpetrators only, victims only, and both perpetrators and victims. Measures also showed variability in evaluating media used to perpetrate CDA (e.g., being specific only to Facebook, emails, or text messages).

Conclusions

This review found a lack of standardized terminology and measurement tools to describe and evaluate CDA. CDA was also situated and described using different conceptual and theoretical models across a range of disciplines. Standardized definitions and measures would be helpful in better identifying what is known about CDA. Further research is needed to promote understanding of CDA experiences.
Title:
Integrative Review of Cyber Dating Abuse in College Students

Keywords:
Cyber Dating Abuse, Cyber Stalking and Sexting

Abstract Summary:
Cyber dating abuse (CDA) is a complex dating abuse nexus including, but not limited to stalking, sexual harassment, psychological harm, or emotional harm perpetrated via technology. Up to 74.1% of college students report CDA. Participants will be able to describe the current terminologies, theories, and measures regarding CDA.

Content Outline:
A. Introduction
The purpose of this integrative review is to describe the current terminologies, theories, and measures regarding cyber dating abuse (CDA) among college students.

B. Body

Main Point #1: Terminologies
There are no universal terminologies to describe CDA.

When examining all of the definitions of the various terminologies, two common themes emerged:

1. inclusion of technology
2. harassing intrusive and hostile comments.

Main Point #2: Theories

References:
Researchers uses six different types of theories to describe the CDA phenomenon:

1. Crime Theories
   1. Differential Association Theory
   2. General Theory of Crime
2. Social Influence Theories
   1. Social Learning Theory
   2. Theory of Triadic Behavior
3. Victimization
   1. Poly-victimization Theory
4. Gender Theories
   1. Ambivalent Sexism Theory
   2. Gender Socializing Theory
5. Aggression Characteristics
   1. Typology of Intimate Partner Violence Theory
6. Evolution
   1. Evolution Theory

**Main Point #3: Measures**

Three different categories of CDA measures were found

1. Victimization only
2. Perpetration only
3. Both victimization and perpetration

Measures used a wide array of technological media

**C. Conclusion**

There is a lack of consensus on CDA terminology and standardized CDA tools. There are a wide range of theories that describe the phenomenon of CDA spanning across various disciplines. Measures focus on various technological media to assess the different categories of CDA.

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**Professional Experience:** Linden is a PhD and MSN student at the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing. Her PhD dissertation focuses on cyber dating abuse and its relationship with binge drinking and mental health outcomes in college students. As a graduate student, Linden has been the recipient of multiple fellowships including the 1) Pre-Doctoral Clinical Translational Science (CTS TL1 TR001858); 2) Pre-Doctoral Technology: Research in Chronic and Critical Illness (T32 NR008857); and 3) Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need (GAANN P200A120097).

**Author Summary:** Linden is currently pursuing an MSN in nursing informatics and nursing PhD degree. She also practices as a clinical acute care psychiatric nurse. Her research focus is on cyber dating abuse and its relationship with binge drinking and mental health outcomes in college students.
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Author Summary: Dr. Elizabeth Schlenk is an Associate Professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing where she teaches graduate students and conducts research focused on behavioral science to promote adherence to treatment regimens. She has 20 years of experience in research, grant funding, interdisciplinary investigative teams, dissemination, and research mentorship. She tested the effect of a self-efficacy based intervention in older adults with osteoarthritis of the knee and hypertension on clinical outcomes and physical activity.

Professional Experience: Jocelyn Anderson is currently a Postdoctoral Scholar at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. Dr. Anderson completed her undergraduate degree in nursing at St. Cloud State University in 2008. Her graduate work was completed at the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing and included a Clinical Nurse Specialist Master's degree as well as her PhD. Her doctoral research focused on the intersection of intimate partner violence, HIV and mental health symptoms among a sample of women living with HIV in Baltimore City. Additional areas of Anderson's research have included use of alternate light source technology in clinical forensic assessments and use of smartphone technology as a response to patients who have experienced sexual assault or intimate partner violence.

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**Professional Experience:** Dr. Miller is the chief of Adolescent Medicine at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh of UPMC and professor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine. Dr. Miller’s research has included examination of sex trafficking among adolescents in Asia, teen dating abuse, and reproductive health, with a focus on underserve youth including pregnant and parenting teens, as well as foster, homeless and gang affiliated youth. Dr. Miller’s current research focuses on the impact of gender-based violence on young women’s reproductive health.

**Author Summary:** Dr. Miller is an active researcher, who’s work on brief clinical interventions and sexual violence programs to reduce dating violence has been funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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**Professional Experience:** Dr. Klem is a reference librarian at the Universtiy of Pittsburgh and UPMC. Dr. Klem’s research intrests focuses on evidence-based practice. Dr. Klem provides education on the use of PubMed, CINAHL and other research databases. Dr. Klem also guest lectures in courses such as Nursing Research, Nursing Informatics, and Foundations of Nursing Practice

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