Young Adult Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence Victimization and Patterns of Allostatic Load Accumulation

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Abstract

Sexual and intimate partner violence are widespread social and health problems in the United States and around the world, and are linked to numerous adverse health outcomes. Chronic health conditions associated with sexual/intimate partner violence (SV/IPV) victimization include hypertension, chronic pain conditions, diabetes, migraines, and digestive disorders. One potential mechanism linking victimization and chronic disease emergence is physiological stress responses. Using data from three waves of the National Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health), this study examines the association between young adult SV/IPV victimization and allostatic load, an indicator of preclinical disease risk captured through multiple biological measures. Longitudinal lagged path models were used to model potential links between victimization and allostatic load at multiple time points. Results suggest that victimization in young adulthood, particularly between ages 25-32, may contribute to elevated allostatic load scores, with implications for chronic disease vulnerability.