Brief Communication: Physical Abuse of Boys and Possible Associations with Poor Adult Outcomes

William C. Holmes, MD, MSCE, and Mary D. Sammel, ScD

Background: Men’s childhood physical abuse experiences are understudied.

Objective: To obtain descriptions about men’s personal childhood physical abuse histories and estimate their association with adult outcomes.


Setting: Urban areas with high frequency of domestic violence against girls and women.

Participants: 298 men recruited through random-digit dialing.

Measurements: 6 Conflict Tactics Scale items and psychiatric, sexual, and legal history questions.

Results: One hundred of 197 (51%) participants had a history of childhood physical abuse. Most (73%) participants were abused by a parent. Childhood physical abuse history was associated with depression symptoms (P = 0.003), post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms (P < 0.001), number of lifetime sexual partners (P = 0.035), legal troubles (P = 0.002), and incarceration (P = 0.007) in unadjusted analyses and with depression symptoms (P = 0.015) and post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms (P = 0.003) in adjusted analyses.

Limitations: There may have been inaccurate recall of past events. Lack of exposure time data disallowed direct comparison of abuse perpetration by mothers versus fathers. Other unmeasured variables related to childhood physical abuse might better explain poor adult outcomes.

Conclusions: The high frequency of childhood physical abuse histories in this population-based male sample, coupled with the high proportion of parent perpetrators and the association between childhood physical abuse and adult outcomes that are often associated with perpetration of violence, argues for more study of and clinical attentiveness to potential adult outcomes of men’s own childhood physical abuse histories.


Publications about childhood physical abuse focus predominantly on girls’ and women’s histories. What we know from male samples, however, indicates that childhood physical abuse prevalence in men may be high—28% in male college students, 34% in Canadian men, and 51% in active-duty male soldiers from the U.S. Army (1–3). Furthermore, the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) identifies parents (most often mothers) as the most frequent abusers of boys (4). We hypothesize that when boys personally experience physical abuse as a resolution to conflict in their childhood home, they may learn that perpetrating domestic or intimate partner violence (both called “domestic violence” hereafter) as men is an acceptable way to resolve conflict in their adult home.

Claims that men’s childhood physical abuse histories might affect their likelihood of becoming perpetrators of domestic violence are conjectural. Thus, our hypothesis-generating study sought to 1) assess how many men from a population-based urban sample reported having been physically abused as boys, 2) assess what proportion of perpetrators were parents, and 3) estimate the association between childhood physical abuse and adult outcomes that are often associated with perpetration of violence (5–8).

METHODS

Participants and Procedures

We recruited participants by random-digit dialing after approval by the University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Boards. Another study aim required use of telephone exchanges for Philadelphia County ZIP codes of areas with a high incidence of AIDS. These areas also have high rates of domestic violence against girls and women (9, 10). The interviewers screened households to identify and recruit men into 1 of 3 age groups: 18 to 29 years of age, 30 to 39 years of age, and 40 to 49 years of age. Appendix Figure 1 (available at www.annals.org) summarizes screening and interviewing methods and numbers.

Variables

Interviewers asked 6 items from the validated Conflict Tactics Scale’s (CTS) Physical Assault dimension (Appendix Figure 2, available at www.annals.org). These items have been used previously to identify childhood physical abuse histories in men and are similar to items used to identify domestic violence in girls and women (2, 11–14). We considered childhood physical abuse to have occurred if responses to questions 1, 2, or 4 were “sometimes” or “often” or if responses to questions 3, 5, or 6 were “rarely,”
“sometimes,” or “often.” We considered severe childhood physical abuse to have occurred if responses to questions 3 or 4 were “often” or if responses to questions 5 or 6 were “rarely,” “sometimes,” or “often.” Participants identified perpetrators for all instances of childhood physical abuse.

Interviewers surveyed a randomly selected sample of 197 men from neighborhoods with a high prevalence of HIV infection. Of the men, 51% had experienced childhood physical abuse, which was severe in 57%. Compared with men who had not experienced childhood physical abuse, men who did had more symptoms of depression and post-traumatic stress syndrome as adults.

**Caution**

Unidentified conditions during childhood may lead to both physical abuse and poor adult outcomes.

**Conclusions**

Domestic physical abuse of boys was common in this sample of men. Being abused is associated with psychiatric illness in adult life.

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**Table 1. Types of Abuse**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Push, Grab, or Shove, n (%)</th>
<th>Throw Something, n (%)</th>
<th>Kick, Bite, or Punch, n (%)</th>
<th>Hit with Something, n (%)</th>
<th>Choke, Burn, or Scald, n (%)</th>
<th>Physically Attack, n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frequency of potentially abusive behavior</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>77 (39)</td>
<td>132 (67)</td>
<td>145 (74)</td>
<td>80 (41)</td>
<td>184 (93)</td>
<td>156 (79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>76 (39)</td>
<td>47 (24)</td>
<td>31 (16)</td>
<td>61 (31)</td>
<td>6 (3)</td>
<td>31 (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>29 (15)</td>
<td>9 (5)</td>
<td>11 (6)</td>
<td>43 (22)</td>
<td>4 (2)</td>
<td>6 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>15 (8)</td>
<td>9 (5)</td>
<td>9 (5)</td>
<td>12 (6)</td>
<td>3 (2)</td>
<td>4 (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total responses</strong></td>
<td>197</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavior meets definition for abuse</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>44 (22)</td>
<td>18 (9)</td>
<td>51 (26)</td>
<td>55 (28)</td>
<td>13 (7)</td>
<td>41 (21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>153 (78)</td>
<td>179 (91)</td>
<td>146 (74)</td>
<td>142 (72)</td>
<td>184 (93)</td>
<td>156 (79)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total responses</strong></td>
<td>197</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perpetrator of behavior meeting definition of abuse</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>21 (50)</td>
<td>11 (65)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>34 (64)</td>
<td>6 (46)</td>
<td>20 (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>18 (43)</td>
<td>4 (24)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>21 (40)</td>
<td>4 (31)</td>
<td>13 (33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-family member</td>
<td>5 (12)</td>
<td>1 (6)</td>
<td>7 (44)</td>
<td>3 (6)</td>
<td>2 (15)</td>
<td>11 (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aunt or uncle</td>
<td>3 (7)</td>
<td>1 (6)</td>
<td>5 (31)</td>
<td>2 (4)</td>
<td>1 (8)</td>
<td>1 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepparent</td>
<td>2 (5)</td>
<td>1 (6)</td>
<td>3 (19)</td>
<td>3 (6)</td>
<td>1 (8)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibling</td>
<td>3 (7)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grandparent</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>1 (6)</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>2 (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other family</td>
<td>2 (5)</td>
<td>1 (6)</td>
<td>1 (6)</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>1 (8)</td>
<td>1 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total responses</strong></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Missing responses</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35†</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The number of total responses should equal that of those reporting behavior that meets the definition of abuse, unless responses were missing. The sum of identified perpetrators may be more than the number of total responses since some participants identified >1 individual who perpetrated specific behavior.

†There were substantial missing data for perpetrators of this specific behavior, the reason for which is unknown.
outcomes (we used dummy variables for included ordinal data). We used SPSS 12.0 for Windows (SPSS Inc., Chicago, Illinois) to manage and analyze data.

Role of the Funding Source

This study was supported by a grant from the National Institute of Drug Abuse (DA015635). The funding source had no role in the design, conduct, or reporting of the study or in the decision to submit the manuscript for publication.

RESULTS

Participants

Of 298 recruited men, 197 (66%) participated. Participants’ mean age was 34 years, 68% were nonwhite, 7% were homosexual or bisexual, 45% had a high school education or less, and 27% had an annual income of $20 000 or less.

Childhood Physical Abuse Histories

Table 1 enumerates types of abuse (as assessed by CTS items): Fifty-five men were hit with an object; 51 men were kicked, bit, or punched; 44 men were pushed, grabbed, or shoved; 41 men were physically attacked; 18 men had an object thrown at them; and 13 men were choked, burned, or scalded. Parents were the most frequent perpetrators.

Of the 197 participants, 100 (51%) men experienced at least 1 form of abuse that meets the definition of childhood physical abuse. Fifty-seven of these men experienced at least 1 form of abuse that meets the definition of severe childhood physical abuse.

Table 2

Table 2. Abuse Prevalence by Sociodemographic Characteristic*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Total Participants, n</th>
<th>Participants with Characteristic</th>
<th>P Value†</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abused, n (%)</td>
<td>Not Abused, n</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–29 y</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>26 (39)</td>
<td>0.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–39 y</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>37 (60)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40–49 y</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>37 (54)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race or ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>55 (52)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13 (72)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>26 (41)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other or mixed</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6 (67)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexual or bisexual</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5 (36)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>93 (52)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing responses</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school or GED or less</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>29 (73)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>22 (46)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24 (60)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s or graduate degree</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>25 (36)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≤$20 000</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>29 (54)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20 001–$40 000</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>26 (52)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40 001–$75 000</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>24 (48)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;$75 000</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18 (56)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental bonding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimal</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>37 (43)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affectionate constraint</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>24 (45)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affectionless control</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>24 (65)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglectful</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13 (68)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing responses</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* GED = general educational development.
† Represents the probability that abuse prevalences in sociodemographic characteristic subcategories differ by chance.
Table 3. Principal Living Arrangement during Childhood and Abuse Status*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living Arrangement</th>
<th>Total, n</th>
<th>Not Abused, n (%)</th>
<th>Abused, n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>By Both Parents</td>
<td>By Mother Only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With both parents simultaneously</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>68 (62)</td>
<td>10 (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With mother only</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>23 (36)</td>
<td>5 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With someone other than parents</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4 (36)</td>
<td>2 (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With father only</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 (14)</td>
<td>1 (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With both parents serially</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1 (20)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>97 (49)</td>
<td>18 (9)§</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Data are not based on previous hypotheses. Given exploratory nature, P values are not reported. All reported percentages are computed within each row, with the denominator being the number reported in the Total column. Not all within-row percentages add up to 100% because of rounding or because there was missing information about the identity of abusers for the following responses: with both parents simultaneously (n = 2), with mother only (n = 1), and with both parents serially (n = 1).
† Denotes the number of men reporting principal living arrangement during childhood (in descending order).
‡ Indicates that 73 of the 100 men who met criteria for abuse attributed abuse to 1 parent or both parents.

Discussion

Although a larger percentage of childhood physical abuse was attributed to mothers than fathers (Table 1), the amount of time spent with mothers and fathers is not known. Table 3 provides an indication of abuse within different living arrangements, which is an indirect measure of exposure to potential perpetrators of domestic violence. Table 3 also clarifies the extent to which men had been abused by parents. Of the 100 men with childhood physical abuse histories, 73 reported that a mother or father had perpetrated at least 1 form of violence that meets the definition of childhood physical abuse.

Potential Outcomes Associated with Childhood Physical Abuse Histories

Unadjusted analyses (Table 4) indicate that a childhood physical abuse history was associated with the number or frequency of depression symptoms (P = 0.003) and post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms (P < 0.001), with the number of lifetime sexual partners (P = 0.035), and with legal troubles (P = 0.002) and incarceration (P = 0.007). After adjustment of continuous outcomes for all variables that either were associated with childhood physical abuse (P < 0.100) or were related conceptually to the association between childhood physical abuse and psychiatric or risk behavior outcomes, however, a childhood physical abuse history was associated only with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms (P = 0.015 and P = 0.003, respectively).

Table 4. Long-Term Outcomes Potentially Associated with Childhood Physical Abuse*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Abused (n = 100)</th>
<th>Not Abused (n = 97)</th>
<th>P Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean (SD) score of frequency of depression symptom†</td>
<td>14.4 (10.7)</td>
<td>9.9 (9.7)</td>
<td>Unadjusted, 0.003; adjusted, 0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean (SD) score of frequency of PTSD symptom‡</td>
<td>9.1 (10.4)</td>
<td>4.1 (6.1)</td>
<td>Unadjusted, &lt;0.001; adjusted, 0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean (SD) age at first willing sexual experience, y</td>
<td>15.0 (3.8)</td>
<td>15.9 (3.8)</td>
<td>Unadjusted, 0.094; adjusted, 0.115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean (SD) lifetime sexual partners, n</td>
<td>21.3 (25.0)</td>
<td>14.1 (19.6)</td>
<td>Unadjusted, 0.030; adjusted, 0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injection drug use ever, n (%)§</td>
<td>5 (5)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal troubles ever, n (%)§</td>
<td>48 (48)</td>
<td>25 (26)</td>
<td>0.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incarcerated ever, n (%)§</td>
<td>19 (19)</td>
<td>6 (6)</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* PTSD = post-traumatic stress disorder.
† The range of possible Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D) scores is 0 to 60, with a higher score indicating that more depression symptoms are present or more frequent. A mean CES-D score of 14.4 for the abused subgroup is near the score cutoff value of ≥16, which is often used to identify likely depression (17).
‡ The range of possible Posttraumatic Stress Diagnostic Scale (PDS) scores is 0 to 51, with a higher score indicating that more PTSD symptoms are present or more frequent. A mean PDS score of 9.1 for the abused subgroup is near the score cutoff value of ≥10, which is used to characterize PTSD symptom severity that is more than mild (16).
§ Subgroup numbers for dichotomous variables were insufficient to allow completion of multivariable logistic regression analyses.
against their own intimate partners, children, or both. If we had assessed domestic violence perpetration by our respondents, we would have been mandated by law to report perpetrators. If we had disclosed this requirement when we sought informed consent, we would have biased our study sample or responses. Instead, we asked participants about outcomes, such as depression, sexual risk, substance abuse, and hostility, which previous studies have reported to be associated with dating violence, domestic violence, and other violent criminal behavior (5–8). These outcomes were substantially more common in men with childhood physical abuse histories, providing a circumstantial case that boys who are victims of domestic violence may be more likely to perpetrate domestic violence as adults.

Three major limitations curb our certainty about this circumstantial case. First, although the sample was population-based, it was also nonaffluent and was largely minority- and urban-based. Thus, results cannot be extended beyond this population. Second, we based our approach to determining the presence of a childhood physical abuse history on responses to CTS questions about acts that did not have equivalent levels of potential injury. Furthermore, we did not assess whether actual bodily harm occurred. Current versions of the CTS allow better characterization of severity (based on likelihood for injury) and chronicity (18). Finally, adjustment for childhood physical abuse subgroup differences attenuated the associations between childhood physical abuse and depression symptoms, posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms, and number of sexual partners. We had too few participants to adjust for dichotomous outcomes. Explanations other than childhood physical abuse histories may, in fact, explain associations with adult outcomes that are associated with violent behavior.

Childhood physical abuse may be a marker for other conditions that are the primary explanatory variables for poor adult outcomes. For instance, the living arrangement differences reported in Table 3 highlight that one potentially explanatory but unmeasured variable may be a chaotic childhood social environment (which may continue into adulthood). Other candidate variables could include age, sex, or educational attainment of parent or parents; alcohol or drug use in the home or neighborhood; number and identity of people living in the primary residence, as well as presence of siblings or a trusted adult; or involvement of child protective services.

Future studies using a case–control design—where cases are men with known perpetration histories—might be conducted to assess cycle-of-violence hypotheses more directly. These and other epidemiologic studies of childhood physical abuse in men must adjust for a fuller set of potential confounders and effect modifiers.

Until research gives us a broader knowledge about men with childhood physical abuse histories, clinicians may be the only resource available to many affected men and boys. Clinicians who are aware that some populations of boys and men may have a high frequency of childhood physical abuse histories have an opportunity to identify these histories when clinical situations suggest their presence. Clinicians also have an obligation to advocate measures to assure the safety of abused boys (as rigorous as those recommended for girls and women), as well as to be alert that adult male patients with childhood physical abuse histories may be experiencing abuse-related outcomes that have negative health consequences (19, 20).

From Philadelphia Veterans Affairs Medical Center and University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

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Requests for Single Reprints: William C. Holmes, MD, MSCE, Center for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, 733 Blockley Hall, 423 Guardian Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6021; e-mail, holmeswc@mail.med.upenn.edu.

Current author addresses and author contributions are available at www.annals.org.

References


Current Author Addresses: Drs. Holmes and Sammel: Center for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, 733 Blockley Hall, 423 Guardian Drive, Philadelphia, PA 19104-6021.

Author Contributions: Conception and design: W.C. Holmes.
Analysis and interpretation of the data: W.C. Holmes, M.D. Sammel.
Drafting of the article: W.C. Holmes.
Critical revision of the article for important intellectual content: W.C. Holmes, M.D. Sammel.
Final approval of the article: W.C. Holmes, M.D. Sammel.
Provision of study materials or patients: W.C. Holmes.
Statistical expertise: M.D. Sammel.
Obtaining of funding: W.C. Holmes.
Administrative, technical, or logistic support: W.C. Holmes.
Collection and assembly of data: W.C. Holmes.
Appendix Figure 1. Disposition of all calls ordered by screenability and frequencies of status.

Total numbers called for screening (n = 13,116)
- No screening possible (n = 10,698)
  - Incorrect or changed telephone number or disconnected: 4,369
  - Line busy or no answer: 1,934
  - Declined, were not home, or appointment was not kept: 1,472
  - Answering machine: 1,013
  - Business or government: 713
  - Fax, modem, or computer: 495
  - Hung up before screening: 401
  - Language barrier: 162
  - Call blocking: 72
  - Health or hearing problem: 49
  - Cellular telephone or teenager’s or child’s telephone: 18

- Partial screening done (n = 2,120)
  - No men in household: 1,590
  - No men in needed age group: 346
  - Partial screening or requested callback: 98
  - Wrong geographical area: 39
  - Declined to give address: 28
  - Declined to give information: 19

Numbers screened, with eligible and willing participants (n = 298)

Excluded (n = 101)
- Declined to participate: 41
- Were busy or unable to reach: 29
- No longer at number (without forwarding information): 17
- Disconnected: 12
- Poor English- or Spanish-language fluency: 2

Men interviewed (n = 197)

*Someone answered the phone and either 1) declined outright, 2) asked for a callback at another time (some made an appointment) but was not there at callbacks, or 3) stated that an eligible man may be in the household, but that man was never home when the number was redialed in follow-up. †Asked for a callback after answering some screening questions but was not there at callbacks. ‡Respondents declined to provide information that was critical to determining eligibility for inclusion. §Respondents declined to provide information that was critical to determining eligibility for inclusion. A description of the study and principal investigator and a consent form were mailed to these potential participants. Interviewers obtained postal addresses from eligible men who expressed interest in participating in a study of how “childhood experiences have affected adult men’s health and well-being.” A description of the study and principal investigator and a consent form were mailed to these potential participants. Interviewers called men back 2 weeks later and administered a full telephone interview to those agreeing to participate. Participants received $15.
**Appendix Figure 2. Conflict Tactics Scale items.**

This section of the interview asks about various experiences you may have had with individuals older than you when you were growing up. This section asks about physically harmful experiences. We realize that these questions are very sensitive. Please remember that all of the answers you give will be kept confidential and will be safely locked in a filing cabinet in a locked room. Please take your time answering each question.

1. When you were growing up, how often did any adult push, grab, or shove you?
   - Often ....................................................... 1
   - Sometimes ........................................... 2
   - Rarely ................................................... 3
   - Never ..................................................... 4
   - Refused ................................................ 5

If "Often" or "Sometimes," please answer 1a. Otherwise, skip to 2.

1a. Who was the adult who did this? [Choose all that apply.]
   - Mother .................................................. 1
   - Father .................................................... 2
   - Sibling .................................................... 3
   - Other family member, specify ...................... 4
   - Other adult, specify ................................... 5
   - Refused ................................................ 6

2. When you were growing up, how often did any adult throw something at you?
   - Often ....................................................... 1
   - Sometimes ............................................. 2
   - Rarely ..................................................... 3
   - Never ...................................................... 4
   - Refused ................................................ 5

If "Often" or "Sometimes," please answer 2a. Otherwise, skip to 3.

2a. Who was the adult who did this? [Choose all that apply.]
   - Mother .................................................. 1
   - Father .................................................... 2
   - Sibling .................................................... 3
   - Other family member, specify ...................... 4
   - Other adult, specify ................................... 5
   - Refused ................................................ 6

3. When you were growing up, how often did any adult kick, bite, or punch you?
   - Often ....................................................... 1
   - Sometimes ............................................. 2
   - Rarely ..................................................... 3
   - Never ...................................................... 4
   - Refused ................................................ 5

If "Often," "Sometimes," or "Rarely," please answer 3a. Otherwise, skip to 4.

3a. Who was the adult who did this? [Choose all that apply.]
   - Mother .................................................. 1
   - Father .................................................... 2
   - Sibling .................................................... 3
   - Other family member, specify ...................... 4
   - Other adult, specify ................................... 5
   - Refused ................................................ 6

4. When you were growing up, how often did any adult hit you with something?
   - Often ....................................................... 1
   - Sometimes ............................................. 2
   - Rarely ..................................................... 3
   - Never ...................................................... 4
   - Refused ................................................ 5

If "Often" or "Sometimes," please answer 4a. Otherwise, skip to 5.

4a. Who was the adult who did this? [Choose all that apply.]
   - Mother .................................................. 1
   - Father .................................................... 2
   - Sibling .................................................... 3
   - Other family member, specify ...................... 4
   - Other adult, specify ................................... 5
   - Refused ................................................ 6

5. When you were growing up, how often did any adult choke, burn, or scald you?
   - Often ....................................................... 1
   - Sometimes ............................................. 2
   - Rarely ..................................................... 3
   - Never ...................................................... 4
   - Refused ................................................ 5

If "Often," "Sometimes," or "Rarely," please answer 5a. Otherwise, skip to 6.

5a. Who was the adult who did this? [Choose all that apply.]
   - Mother .................................................. 1
   - Father .................................................... 2
   - Sibling .................................................... 3
   - Other family member, specify ...................... 4
   - Other adult, specify ................................... 5
   - Refused ................................................ 6

6. When you were growing up, how often did any adult physically attack you in some other way?
   - Often ....................................................... 1
   - Sometimes ............................................. 2
   - Rarely ..................................................... 3
   - Never ...................................................... 4
   - Refused ................................................ 5

If "Often," "Sometimes," or "Rarely," please answer 6a. Otherwise, continue to next question.

6a. Who was the adult who did this? [Choose all that apply.]
   - Mother .................................................. 1
   - Father .................................................... 2
   - Sibling .................................................... 3
   - Other family member, specify ...................... 4
   - Other adult, specify ................................... 5
   - Refused ................................................ 6

Based on questions asked of men in the study by MacMillan et al (2).