

Attitudes toward intimate partner violence among Croatian university students

Maja Miskulin

M Miskulin, M Matic Licanin, I Miskulin, J Milas, D Holik, D Nujic
Faculty of Medicine Osijek, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek,
Osijek, Croatia

Contact: maja.miskulin@mefos.hr

Background:

Attitudes toward intimate partner violence (IPV) have been consistently demonstrated as one of prominent predictors of IPV. Studies have shown that positive attitudes toward IPV increase the rates of IPV in different populations. The aim of this study was to investigate the attitudes of Croatian university students toward IPV and its interconnections with gender, their field of studies and repetition of a year of study.

Methods:

This was a cross-sectional study, a validated, anonymous questionnaire was self-administered by cross-faculty representative student sample of University of Osijek, Eastern Croatia. General demographic data, data on academic status and data related to attitudes toward IPV among students were collected.

Results:

The study sample included 880 students, the average age being 22 years (range 19-54), 33.9% males and 66.1% females. Among all study participants there were 30.2% of those with less positive and 69.8% of those with more positive attitudes toward IPV. Study revealed how more positive attitudes toward IPV were more frequent among males (86.2%) than among females (61.3%) (χ^2 -test; $p < 0.001$). According to the field of studies, 56.9% of students within the biomedicine and health sciences, 81.1% of students within the technical field, 85.5% of students within the biotechnical field, 69.8% of students within the social sciences and 62.0% of students within the humanities had more positive attitudes toward IPV (χ^2 -test; $p < 0.001$). Considering the repetition of a year of study 77.0% of students who repeated and 67.7% of students who did not repeat a year of study, had more positive attitudes toward IPV (χ^2 -test; $p = 0.013$).

Conclusions:

The majority of Croatian university students revealed more positive attitudes toward IPV. In order to prevent IPV among university students' strategies for changing attitudes toward IPV are strongly needed.

Key messages:

- Positive attitudes towards intimate partner violence are significant predictors of students' behavior in intimate relationships.
- By modifying university students' attitudes towards intimate partner violence more successful primary prevention of IPV occurrence in this population could be achieved.