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SPECIAL ARTICLE

Domestic Violence and Children: Prevalence and Risk in Five Major  
U.S. Cities

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ABSTRACT

Objective

Children witnessing domestic violence is a major national concern. The present study provided data on the prevalence of children's exposure to substantiated cases of adult female assaults in five U.S. cities.

Method

Data for this study were drawn from the Spouse Assault Replication Program (SARP) database, collected from police officers and female victims of misdemeanor domestic violence. In addition, household demographic data and data on involvement of children in the violent incidents were collected. Data from the SARP households were compared with census data from each city

with census data from each city.

## Results

Results indicated that children were disproportionately present in households with domestic violence and that young children were disproportionately represented among these children. Moreover, these children were exposed to excessive levels of additional developmental risk factors and they were involved in the incidents to varying degrees.

## Conclusions

These findings underscore the importance of establishing a more rigorous interdisciplinary, scientific research agenda to inform assessment and treatment efforts for a very vulnerable group of children who witness domestic violence, children aged 0 through 5 years.



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## Key Words

domestic violence; children; developmental risk; prevalence

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