

# Motherhood and Intimate Partner Violence among Young Adults

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## Background

- Young adulthood is a stressful time of the life course due to transitions including motherhood.
- Intimate partner violence (IPV) peaks during young adulthood. Much of it is mutual violence.
- Studies of motherhood as a precursor of IPV are inconclusive. Scholars examining motherhood and violence have focused on child outcomes.
- The current study focuses on children as possible stressors linking motherhood and IPV. Union status and education may modify the relationship.

## Stress Process Theory

- Life events create or intensify existing strains resulting in stress.
- Demands associated with motherhood increase stress in daily living.
- Parenting stress may result in mothers, compared with non-mothers, manifesting more partner aggression.
- Education and union status may be resources.

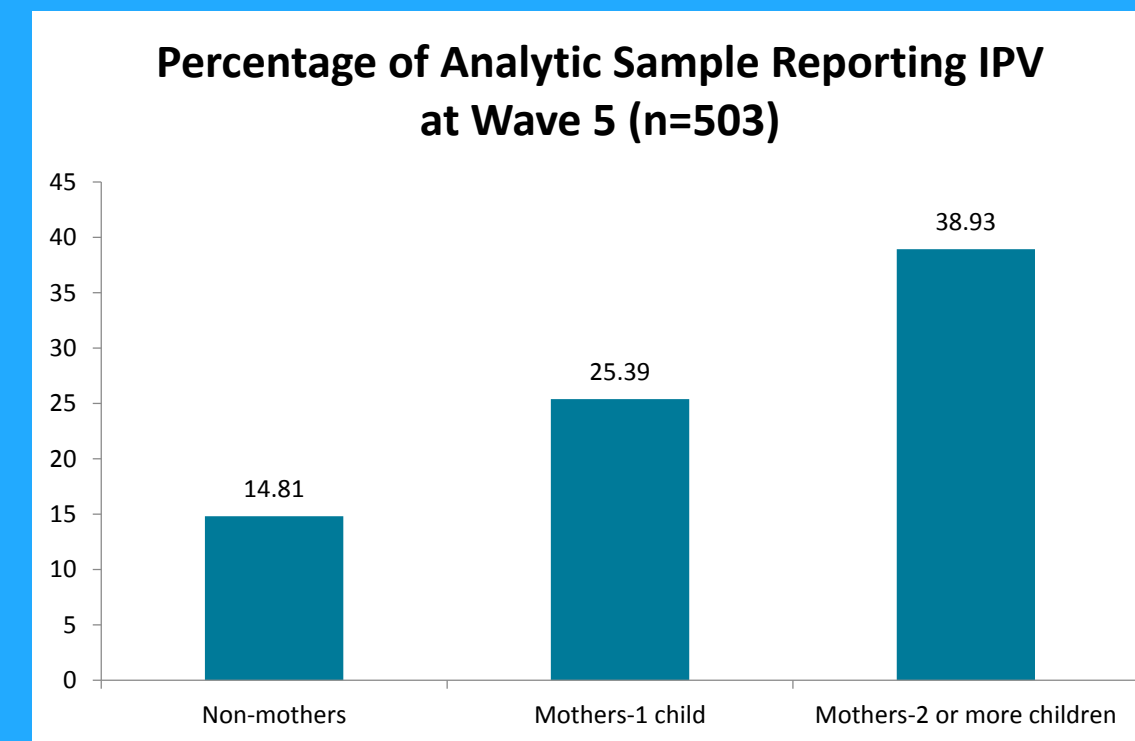
## Current Investigation

- Assess the association between motherhood, including number of children, and IPV.
- Determine whether stress, union status, and educational level moderate the association between motherhood and IPV.

## Data and Sample

Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study (TARS):

- Wave 5 (n=1,021), ages 22-29



## Key Measures

Dependent variable

- IPV: 24-item based on Conflict Tactics Scale

Independent variable

- Motherhood status: non-mother, mothers - 1 child, mothers - 2 or more children

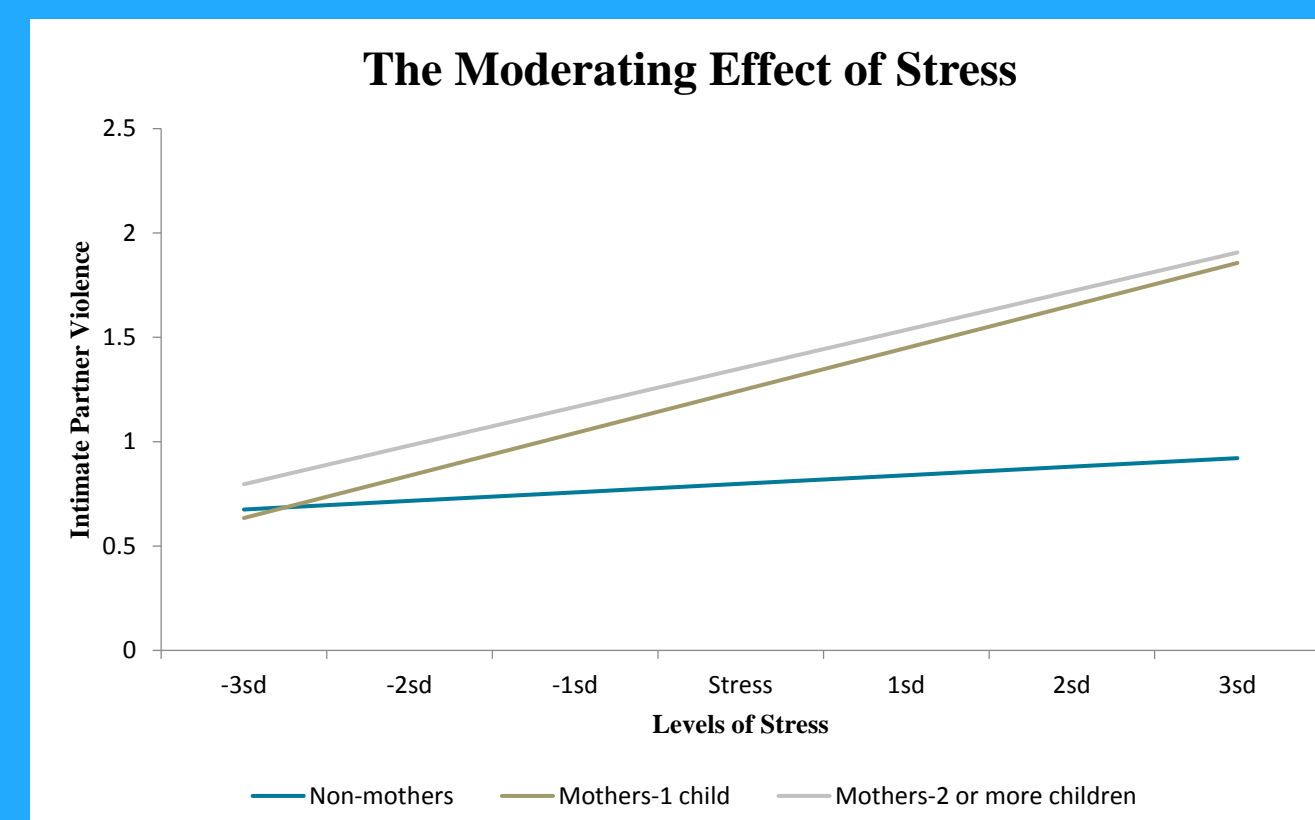
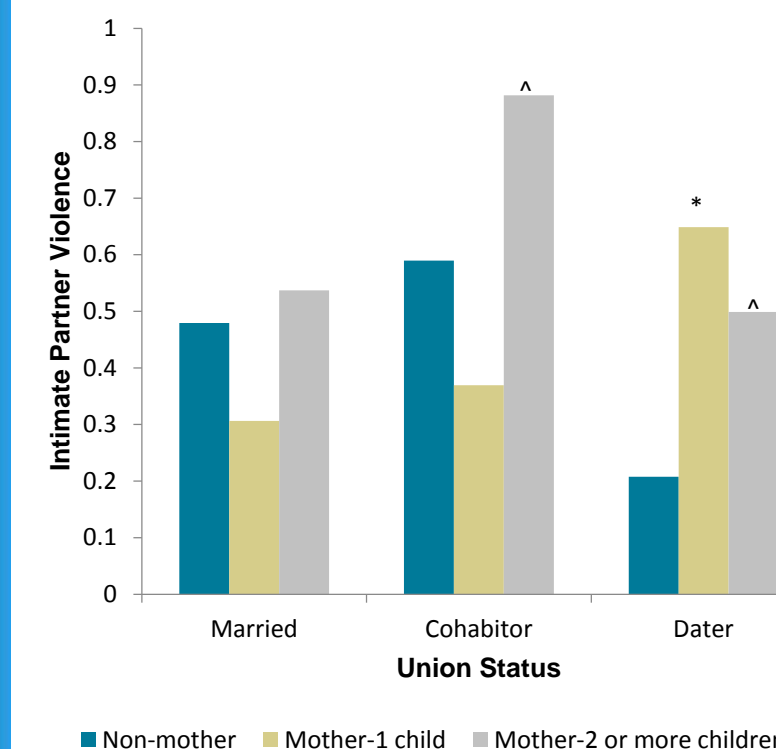


Table 1. OLS Regression for the Association between Motherhood Status, Sociodemographic Characteristics, Adult Status Characteristics, Relationship Characteristics and Verbal Conflict (n=503)

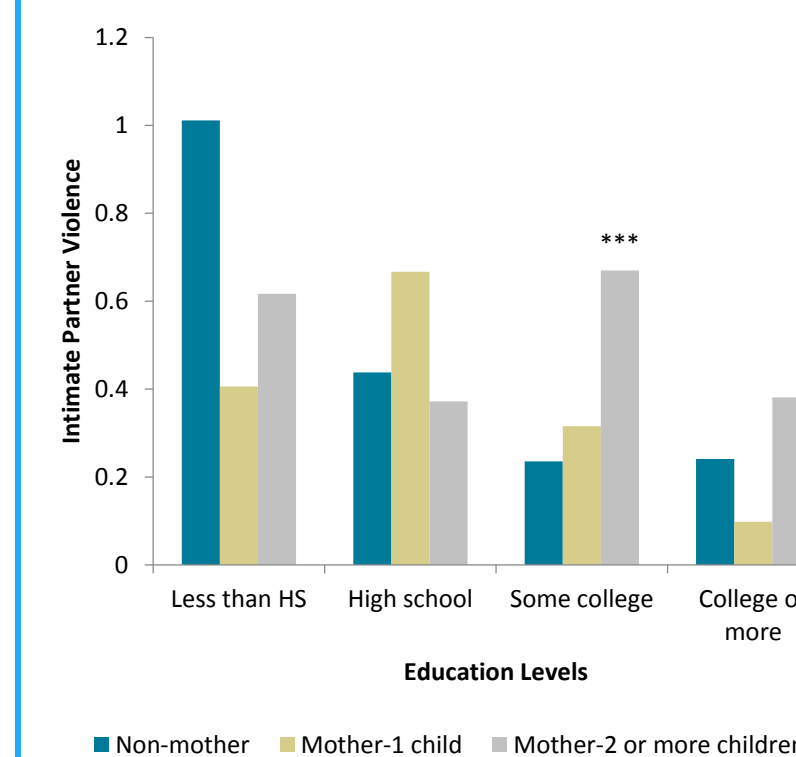
	Zero Order	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7	Model 8
<b>Parenthood status</b>								
Mother (1 child)	.33**	.40***	.27*	.31**	.28**	.31**	.17	.25*
Mother (2 or more)	.58***	.61***	.49***	.56***	.51***	.53***	.34**	.37***
<b>General stress</b>								
General stress	.64***	.69***						.71***
<b>Sociodemographic Characteristics</b>								
<b>Race</b>								
(White)								
Black	.50***		.31**			.35**		.38***
Hispanic	.33*		.19			.18		.16
Other	.39		.32			.38		.35
Age	.01		.00			-.01		.01
<b>Family Factors</b>								
<b>Family structure</b>								
(Two bio parents)								
Single parent	.39***		.20^			.19^		.20*
Step-parent	.25*		.08			.08		.10
Other	.25*		-.02			-.07		-.03
<b>Socioeconomic Status</b>								
<b>Mother's education</b>								
(High school)								
Less than HS	.00		-.20			-.20		-.20
Some college	.06		.06			.05		.00
College or more	-.27*		-.13			-.10		-.13
<b>Family Violence</b>								
Witnessing parental violence	.12*		.07			.03		-.05
<b>Adult Status Characteristics</b>								
<b>Education</b>								
(High school)								
Less than HS	.16				.06	.08		.08
Some college	-.05				.00	-.04		-.04
College or more	-.34**				-.13	-.09		-.08
<b>Respondent's Employment</b>								
Full-time employment	-.21*				-.04	-.11		-.05
Part-time employment	-.13				-.05	-.02		-.05
<b>Relationship Characteristics</b>								
<b>Union status</b>								
(Married)								
Dating	-.17^					.03		-.10
Cohabiting	.08					.28*		.20^
Current relationship	-.42***					-.57***		-.48***
Duration	.05***					.06**		.07***
R <sup>2</sup>		.17	.11	.07	.07	.14	.19	.28

^ p < .1; \* p < .05; \*\* p < .01; \*\*\* p < .001  
 Source: Toledo Adolescent Relationships Study

## The Moderating Effect of Union Status



## The Moderating Effect of Educational Attainment



## Multivariate Results

- Mothers, in particular women with two or more children, compared with non-mothers, have higher levels of IPV.
- At average and above levels of stress, mothers compared with non-mothers have significantly greater levels of IPV.
- Motherhood is more strongly associated with IPV for daters than cohabiting or married mothers.
- The education gradient associated with lower levels of IPV does not exist when mothers have two or more children.

## Conclusions/Future Research

- Motherhood is positively associated with IPV. Future work should focus on fathers.
- Stress accelerates the association between motherhood and IPV.
- The association between motherhood and IPV varies according to education and union status. Education is not as protective when there are 2 or more children.
- Young adult parents may benefit from parenting and stress management programs.

This project was supported by Award Nos. 2009-IJ-CX-0503 and 2010-MU-MU-0031, awarded by the National Institute of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, U. S. Department of Justice, and in part by the Center for Family and Demographic Research, Bowling Green State University, which has core funding from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development R24HD050959. The opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this publication/program/exhibition are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department of Justice. This research was supported in part by the Center for Family and Demographic Research, Bowling Green State University, which has core funding from the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (R24HD050959).