

Objectives/Background. Family instability has increased dramatically over the last 40 years, leading to higher rates of children growing up in single parent households. The trend toward unwed childbirth and relationship dissolution has been particularly pronounced among young, ethnic minority couples. The primary objective of this presentation is to describe the efficacy of a co-parenting counseling program designed to support the interpersonal development of young expectant parents at risk for relationship problems, including intimate partner violence (IPV; Florsheim, 2014). The study described expands on previous work demonstrating the positive effects of YPP on young fathers (Florsheim et al., 2012). In the current study, it was expected that YPP-enrolled fathers would demonstrate improvements in their relationship skills and their partners would report lower rates of IPV and depression at 6 and 18-months post-childbirth.

Methods. 140 couples were recruited to participate in a randomized control trial of YPP. Interpersonal skills were measured using video-recorded interaction data collected prenatally and at 6 months post birth and coded using a validated interpersonal coding scheme. Follow up data on relationship violence and depression were collected at 6 and 18-months post-birth.

Results. Fathers in YPP were observed to engage in less hostile communications compared to control group fathers. Couples in YPP were also less likely to report IPV at the 18-month follow-up. Decreased interpersonal hostility was associated with decreased rates of depression.

Conclusion/Discussion. This study demonstrates the utility of including young fathers in prenatal care and providing expectant couples with relationship-focused counseling.

Florsheim, P. (2014). *The Young Parenthood Program: Guide to Helping Young Mothers and Fathers Become Effective Co-Parents*. Oxford University Press.

Florsheim, P., Burrow-Sanchez, J., Minami, T., Heavin, S., McArthur, L., & Hudak, C. (2012). A randomized trial of a counseling program for pregnant adolescents and their co-parenting partners. *American Journal of Public Health, 102*, 1886-1892.