

THE EFFECT OF OFFICE-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION - A CLUSTER

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Background: Children in the U.S. are socialized to violence through several means including witnessing media violence, accessing unsafely stored firearms, and experiencing corporal punishment. While clinicians cannot modify all violence-related factors, they can ameliorate some by identifying risks, educating families, and facilitating behavior change.

Objective: To examine the effectiveness of an office-based violence prevention (VP) intervention in a national cluster randomized controlled trial.

Design/Methods: Pediatric Research in Office Settings (PROS) practices were randomly assigned. Each practice's providers delivered either an office-based VP intervention addressing media use, discipline, and firearm accessibility or a reading promotion attention placebo control. The VP intervention consisted of brief screening, counseling, and "tangible tools" (minute timers, firearm cable locks). Parents of children ages 2-11 completed pre-visit surveys of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors in the three VP domains. Immediately post-visit, parents were surveyed as to what had occurred during the visit; 1 and 6 months later, they were surveyed again by phone about the visit and subsequent changes in VP behavior. Generalized Estimating Equations were applied to examine behavior change over time.

Results: The 125 practices (202 providers) from 49 states, Canada, and Puerto Rico enrolled 4,890 families. Most respondents were mothers, 18% were Latino, 12% were African American, and about 1/4 represented single-parent families. Families reported mean media use of 3.1 hours/day; 25% reported firearm ownership, with only 1/3 indicating safe storage practices. We found a significant intervention effect in reducing media use to < 2 hours/day (OR: 1.51, p =0.001) and in storing firearms more safely (OR: 2.37, p <0.001) (model included maternal education, race/ethnicity, child age, and geography).

Conclusions: A brief office-based violence prevention intervention resulted in significant effects in decreasing media use and storing firearms more safely.