**Evaluating the effectiveness of domestic abuse prevention education: Are certain children more or less receptive to the messages conveyed?**

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**Objectives**: A number of school-based domestic abuse prevention programmes have been developed in the UK but evidence as to the effectiveness of such programmes is limited. The aim of the research was to evaluate the effectiveness of one such programme called Relationships without Fear.

**Design**: Pre-test post-test control group design.

**Methods**: Pupils aged 13-14 years across seven schools receiving a 6-week education programme completed a questionnaire to measure their attitudes towards domestic violence at pre and post-test, and also responded to questions about experiences of abuse (as victims, perpetrators and witnesses) and help-seeking. Children in another six schools not yet receiving the intervention responded to the same questions at pre and post-test. Children receiving the intervention completed the same measures after three months. In total, 1203 children took part in the research.

**Results**: Boys and girls who had received the intervention became less accepting of domestic violence and more likely to seek help from pre to post-test, compared to those in the control group. The outcomes did not vary by experiences of abuse. The change in attitudes for those in the intervention group was maintained at follow-up.

**Conclusions**: Domestic abuse prevention education can be effective in changing girls’ *and* boys’ attitudes towards domestic abuse and encouraging more of them to seek help. However, it may be harder to maintain changes in help-seeking over time. The effectiveness of such programmes does not seem to be moderated by children’s own experiences of domestic abuse.