Reviewer’s report

Title: Knowledge, experience, and potential risks of dating violence among Japanese university students: a cross-sectional study

Version: 4 Date: 28 March 2011

Reviewer: Heather L McCauley

Reviewer’s report:

It is a pleasure to re-review your manuscript. I appreciate your careful attention to my previous recommendations.

Please see my recommendations to address prior to publication.

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. I would move the following sentence to the limitations section: “The WHO multi-country study in Japan was performed in Yokohama city, which is one of most urbanized cities in Japan, and the results may not be representative of the situations in different areas of Japan, such as small towns, rural areas, etc., or of the country as a whole.”

2. Regarding Cronbach’s alphas, I would recommend presenting alphas for perpetration, victimization and recognition of abuse, but point out their relative strengths in the limitations section (as you did in your edits). (It would be interesting for a future paper to assess the psychometric properties of the scales, including a factor analysis to tease apart the different types of violence these scales really capture.)

3. Table 4 is not helpful to summarize the results you present in the text. I would remove the current table 4, and create a table with the numbers you present in the text. I would also remove table 5. This information can be summarized in the text just fine.

Discretionary Revisions:

1. I am hesitant to put weight on the item measuring “neglect” of a dating partner. I am unclear on what neglect in this case entails. I would remove the item from the first part of your discussion section.

2. You present quite a few results. I think the results section would be more organized if you provide section headings for the results. This is because the response options are the same for all sections and it is easy to misunderstand one paragraph is the perpetration of behaviors while the next section is the experience of victimization. For example:

Perpetration of Abusive Behaviors
Prevalence of Abuse Victimization

Recognition of Abusive Behaviors

3. Discussion: The mention of the Safe Dates program does not make sense here. You could reword the sentence starting with “Foshee, et al” to read (for example): “The Safe Dates program implemented among adolescents in [insert country here] addressed sexual health in dating relationships however evaluations to date have not demonstrated long term effectiveness to reduce threats to adolescent sexual health.”

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests.