Reviewer's report

Title: A Grounded Theory of Female Adolescents Dating Experiences and Factors Influencing Safety: The Dynamics of the Circle

Version: 2 Date: 5 June 2007

Reviewer: Diann M. Ackard

Reviewer's report:

General
1. The first paragraph provides helpful information on the developmental theories of relationships, but seems like it was just "dropped in." Please rework this paragraph for flow and incorporate a transitional sentence or segue into the paragraph following.
2. 2nd paragraph, fourth sentence; differences are also attributed to means of collecting the information (interview, self-report, etc) and how the questions were asked.
3. Move the first sentence of the Methods section, stating the purpose of the study, to the introduction.

Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
1. 3rd paragraph of intro. Clarify the suggestion that "there is not a great amount of warning for physical violence" - do we really know this? Is it possible that individuals reporting physical violence could have also been threatened with physical violence before the violence occurred? We would need to know how the study referenced as 4 was conducted in order to understand if your suggestion is accurate.
2. 5th paragraph of intro. How are the first two sentences related to the third sentence? Please modify for flow.
3. 6th paragraph of intro. You state "Teens may not define violent acts appropriately." Clarify what you mean here, and tell the reader what "appropriately" might mean. Is the definition of a violent act subjective or objective?
4. Methods. You outline two assumptions of the study, but provide no reference for them. I'm particularly concerned about the second assumption. There are individuals who know that violence within a relationship is "wrong," thus your second assumption is flawed - the perpetration of the abuse may not necessarily indicate lack of knowledge or skills needed to develop and form healthy intimate relationships.
5. How were your participants recruited?
6. Please delete all names from the quotes (even if the names are fictional) and instead, refer to them as "one participant" or if you feel compelled to be able to identify comments from same participants, then use "participant 12 said" or "participant C said". You may also wish to put some descriptions, such as "one 16-year old Caucasian participant said...."

Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
1. Page 7, fourth sentence, do not capitalize "participants" mid-sentence.
2. Page 9, second sentence of top paragraph runs on.
3. Page 11, second paragraph. Please do not italicize "sex parties"
4. Page 17, 19, 20, headings. These heading are in italics whereas the previous ones were not. Please change to be consistent.

Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Unable to decide on acceptance or rejection until the authors have responded to the major compulsory revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

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.