**Title**

Australian young women’s perceptions of dating and dating violence

**Author and affiliations**

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**Background**

Dating violence is a significant problem in Australia affecting at least 1 in 4 young women [1]. It has devastating impacts for the young women and the community [2, 3]. There is evidence that attitudes supporting violence against women are widespread in Australia [4]. However, there is a need for qualitative research exploring young women’s views on dating and dating violence in Australia [5].

**Aims**

To explore how Australian young women perceive dating and dating violence in heterosexual relationships.

**Method**

A qualitative study was undertaken as part of the author’s PhD to explore young women’s perceptions of dating violence. 16-25 year old young women who had experienced dating violence were recruited from across Australia. Narrative interviews were conducted face-to-face and via telephone. Interviews were analysed thematically and then social script theory was applied as an explanatory framework to interpret the findings.

**Results**

35 young women from urban and rural Australia were interviewed. The young women experienced several types of casual and committed romantic relationships. The romantic relationships were overwhelmingly scripted and gendered, where roles and events were predictable. The young women usually adopted submissive roles in the relationships while the young men had more control.

**Conclusion**

Current heterosexual dating scripts in Australia appear to be heavily influenced by traditional patriarchal values. This emphasises male control over females and influences how young women perceive abuse and violence in their relationships.

**References**

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