

DISCUSSION

The hypothesis relating marital system dynamics to triangulation was tested on a middle-class U. S. sample. The results supported the hypothesis that a couple's inability to handle differences and disagreements may lead to the triangulation of an adolescent, either pushed out as a scapegoat or pulled in as a coalition partner or mediator.

In both the U. S. and Japanese samples, triangled sons were found to be scapegoated. This is consistent with a general pattern in the data, across both cultures, for boys to be more distant from parents (especially mothers) than were girls. That is, boys, compared with girls, disagreed more with parents about the description of family life, relative to the amount of disagreement between the parents. Girls were more likely than boys to be pulled in as mediators or as a coalition partner with a parent. Girls in all-girl families, however, where there were no boys to be the object of scapegoating, were more likely to be scapegoated than were girls who had brothers.

Results also supported the second hypothesis, that triangulation of an adolescent can interfere with her personal development. This result was found for girls in both U. S. and Japanese samples. The hypothesis was also tested for Japanese sons. The results were in the predicted direction but were not significant. The fact that no relationship was found between adolescent development and triangulation for Japanese boys is consistent with the idea that girls are more affected by family system process than are boys. Likewise, sons in both cultures were seen to be slightly more distant from parents than were daughters, judging by the greater differences between sons and their parents concerning their view of the family.

The analyses reported here find a cross-cultural pattern suggesting a similar family process, the effect of triangulation, in both the Japan and the U.S. The implication is that there are some fundamentals of family structure and process that are common cross-culturally. These data, along with others we have reported elsewhere, suggest to us that some cultural differences between the United States and Japan may have been exaggerated in the past. We have found important similarities, along with differences, both in marital patterns (Bell & Bell, 2000), and in conceptions of the healthy family (Bell et al., 1996).

When comparing two groups, there seems to be a natural tendency to polarize, to exaggerate differences, and to ignore differences within a culture according to gender or historical cohort. Cherished hypotheses concerning differences (for example, that Americans are more independent, Japanese more interdependent) tend to hang on despite of evidence to the contrary (Matsumoto, 1999). Hermans and Kempen (1998) provide a useful discussion of some of these issues. They suggest that new approaches are needed, in part because of our increasingly interconnected world society. Cross-cultural researchers must at least take care to describe both similarity and difference, within-culture variations, and change over time. Highlighting fundamental family processes in the context of cultural variation is both an important and a delicate task.

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- Growth increases between 10 to 14 years:
 - weight: 15 to 55 pounds
 - height: 2 to 10 inches
- Age of puberty: 8 to 13 years of age

What changes will occur during puberty?

Sexual and other physical maturation that occurs during puberty results from hormonal changes. As the adolescent nears puberty, a gland in the brain called the pituitary gland increases the secretion of a hormone called follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH). This hormone then causes additional effects. In girls, FSH activates the ovaries to start producing estrogen. In boys, FSH causes sperm to develop.

Girls experience puberty as a sequence of events, but their pubertal changes usually begin before boys of the same age. Each girl is different and may progress through these changes differently. The following are average ages that changes may occur:

- beginning of puberty: 8 to 13 years
- first pubertal change: breast development
- pubic hair development: shortly after breast development
- hair under the arms: 12 years of age
- menstrual periods: 10 to 16.5 years of age

There are specific stages of development that both boys and girls go through when developing secondary sexual characteristics. The following is a brief overview of the changes that occur:

- In girls, the initial puberty change is the development of breast buds, in which a small mound is formed by the elevation of the breast and papilla (nipple). The areola (the circle of different colored skin around the nipple) increases in size at this time.
- The breasts then continue to enlarge.
- Eventually, the nipples and the areolas will elevate again, forming another projection on the breasts.
- At the adult state, only the nipple remains erect.
- Pubic hair development is similar for both girls and boys. The initial growth of hair produces long, soft hair that is only in a small area around the genitals. This hair then becomes darker and coarser as it continues to spread.
- The pubic hair eventually looks like adult hair, but in a smaller area. It may spread to the thighs and sometimes up the stomach.

The following are additional changes that may occur for the female as she experiences the changes of puberty:

- There may be an increase in hair growth, not only the pubic area, but also under the arms and on the legs. Many women may decide to shave this hair.
- The females' body shape will also begin to change. There may be not only an increase in height and weight, but the hips may get wider. There may also be an increase in fat

in the buttocks, legs, and stomach. These are normal changes that may occur during puberty.

- Her body size will increase, with the feet, arms, legs, and hands beginning to grow in advance of the body. This may cause the adolescent girl to experience a time of feeling clumsy.
- As the hormones of puberty increase, adolescents may experience an increase in oily skin and sweating. This is a normal part of growing. It is important to wash daily, including the face. Acne may develop.
- Adolescent girls will also experience menstruation, or menstrual periods. This begins when the body releases an egg from the ovaries. If the egg is fertilized with a sperm from a male, it will grow into a baby inside the uterus. If the egg is not fertilized, the endometrial lining of the uterus is not needed and is shed through the vagina as fluid. The fluids are bloody and are usually released monthly. After a girl begins to menstruate, she is able to get pregnant.

What does my teenager understand?

The teenage years bring many changes, not only physically, but also mentally and socially. Children in these years increase their ability to think abstractly and eventually make plans and set long-term goals. Each child may progress at different rates, and show a different view of the world. In general, the following are some of the abilities that may be evident in your teenager:

- developing the ability to think abstractly
- concerns with philosophy, politics, and social issues
- thinking long-term
- setting goals
- comparing oneself to one's peers

Your adolescent's relationships with others:

As your adolescent begins to struggle for independence and control, many changes may occur. The following are some of the issues that may be involved with your adolescent during these years:

- He/she wants independence from parents.
- Peer influence and acceptance is very important.
- Peer relationships become very important.
- He/she may be in love.
- He/she may have long-term commitment in relationship.

Depression - adolescents; Teenage depression

Definition [Return to top](#)

A disorder occurring during the teenage years marked by persistent [sadness](#), [discouragement](#), loss of self-worth, and loss of interest in usual activities.

Causes, incidence, and risk factors [Return to top](#)

Depression can be a transient response to many situations and stresses. In adolescents, depressed mood is common because of the normal maturation process, the [stress](#) associated with it, the influence of sex hormones, and independence conflicts with parents.

It may also be a reaction to a disturbing event, such as the death of a friend or relative, a breakup with a boyfriend or girlfriend, or failure at school. Adolescents who have low self-esteem, are highly self-critical, and who feel little sense of control over negative events are particularly at risk to become depressed when they experience stressful events.

True depression in teens is often difficult to diagnose because normal adolescent behavior is marked by both up and down moods, with alternating periods of feeling 'the world is a great place' and 'life sucks'. These moods may alternate over a period of hours or days.

Persistent depressed mood, faltering school performance, failing relations with family and friends, [substance abuse](#), and other negative behaviors may indicate a serious depressive episode. These symptoms may be easy to recognize, but depression in adolescents often manifests very differently than these classic symptoms.

Excessive sleeping, change in eating habits, even criminal behavior (like shoplifting) may be signs of depression. Another common symptom of adolescent depression is an obsession with death, which may take the form either of suicidal thoughts or of fears about death and dying.

Long-term depressive illness usually has its onset in the teen or young adult years -- about 15% to 20% of American teens have experienced a serious episode of depression, which is similar to the proportion of adults suffering from depression.

Adolescent girls are twice as likely as boys to experience depression. Risk factors include stressful life events, particularly loss of a parent to death or divorce; child abuse; unstable caregiving, poor social skills; chronic illness; and family history of depression.

Symptoms [Return to top](#)

- depressed or irritable mood
- temper, agitation
- loss of interest in activities, apathy
- reduced pleasure in daily activities
- inability to enjoy activities which used to be sources of pleasure
- change in appetite, usually a loss of appetite but sometimes an increase
- change in weight (unintentional weight loss or unintentional weight gain)
- persistent difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep ([insomnia](#))
- excessive daytime sleepiness
- fatigue
- difficulty concentrating
- difficulty making decisions
- memory loss (amnesia) episodes
- preoccupation with self
- feelings of worthlessness, [sadness](#), or self-hatred
- excessive or inappropriate feelings of guilt
- acting-out behavior (missing curfews, unusual defiance)
- thoughts about [suicide](#) or obsessive fears or worries about death

- plans to commit suicide or actual suicide attempt
- excessively irresponsible behavior pattern

If these symptoms persist for at least two weeks and cause significant distress or difficulty functioning, treatment should be sought.

Signs and tests [Return to top](#)

- physical examination and blood tests to rule out medical causes for the symptoms (for example: hypothyroidism, pregnancy, kidney disease).
- evaluation for substance abuse -- heavy drinking, frequent marijuana smoking, and other drug use can be both causes and consequences of depression. Past practice in addiction treatment was to assume depression was only a symptom of use, not a potential cause, and it was left untreated. Research now shows that this leads to increased risk of relapse. If a substance abuse problem is found, be sure that psychiatric evaluation doesn't stop at diagnosing this, but continues to assess depression and other potential psychiatric problems.
- psychiatric evaluation to assess a history of persistent sad, empty, or irritable mood and loss of interest or pleasure in normal activities. Evaluation for other potentially co-existing psychiatric disorders (such as anxiety, mania, or schizophrenia).
- assessment of suicidal/homicidal risks.
- information from family members or school personnel is often helpful in identifying depression in teens.

Treatment [Return to top](#)

Treatment options for adolescents with depression are similar to those for depressed adults, and include psychotherapy and antidepressant medications (see [major depression](#) for a review of treatments and self-care). However, one major antidepressant, Paxil, now has a warning NOT to be given to children under 18.

Family therapy may be helpful if family conflict is contributing to the depression. Support from family or teachers to help with school problems may also be needed. Occasionally, hospitalization in a psychiatric unit may be required for individuals with severe depression, or if they are at risk of [suicide](#).

Because of the behavior problems that often co-exist with adolescent depression, many parents are tempted to utilize punitive solutions like "boot camps", "wilderness programs", or "emotional growth schools."

These programs frequently utilize non-professional staff and use confrontational therapies and harsh punishments. There is no scientific evidence which supports use of these programs. In fact, there is a growing body of research which suggests that they can actually harm teens, particularly sensitive teens with depression.

Depressed teens who act out may also become involved with the criminal justice system. Parents are often advised not to intervene, but to "let them experience consequences."

Unfortunately, this can also harm teens through exposure to more deviant peers and reduction in educational opportunities. A better solution is to get the best possible legal advice and search for treatment on your own, which gives parents more control over techniques used and options.

Though a large percentage of teens in the criminal justice system have mental disorders like depression, few juvenile prisons, "boot camps" or other "alternative to prison" programs provide adequate treatment.

Expectations (prognosis) [Return to top](#)

Depressive episodes usually respond to treatment, and early and comprehensive treatment of depression in adolescence may prevent further episodes. However, about half of seriously depressed teens are likely to have continued problems with depression as adults.

Complications [Return to top](#)

Teenage suicide is associated with [depression](#) as well as many other factors. Depression frequently interferes with school performance and interpersonal relationships. Teens with depression often have other psychiatric problems, such as anxiety disorders.

Depression is also commonly associated with violence and reckless behavior. Drug, alcohol, and tobacco abuse frequently coexist with depression. Adolescents with additional psychiatric problems usually require longer and more intensive treatment.

Degrees of Absenteeism of Fathers

Female observation and perception is dependent upon whether they lost their father to divorce, abandonment or death, and at what age. How and why a father is absent will have an impact on the emotional and material outcome for the child (Grimm-Wassil, 1994, p. 5). The different answers help explain why some females have abandonment issues, depict men a certain way, have difficulties determining their self worth or consequently become sexually promiscuous.

Girls who have little contact with their fathers, especially during adolescence had great difficulties forming lasting relationships with men. Sadly these females either shy away from males altogether or become sexually aggressive. Girls with involved fathers learn how to interact with males by using the father-daughter relationship as a model. They not only have a concerned male to converse with but also a feeling of acceptance, knowing they are loved by at least one male. Females without father figures often become desperate for male attention (Grimm-Wassil, 1994).

Children who lose their fathers before age seven tend to show significant reduction in awareness and differentiation of their broader social environment, along with relationships formed with diverse groups outside their immediate family (Lifshitz, 1976, p. 196). Children who lose their fathers early may become more preoccupied with internal organization, family life and other close relationships, rather than with situations at large such as the classroom environment, etc. (Lifshitz, 1976).

Females deprived of a father as a result of death tend to have the most positive concept of their father while feeling the saddest about his disappearance. Girls whose fathers died before the age of five are extremely reticent around male adults, shy away from physical contact with them and rarely smile (Grimm-Wassil, 1994, p. 149). Furthermore, daughters of widows are less inclined to possess a lot of anger or seek immense amounts of attention from adults or males. In terms of sexuality daughters of widows were likely to be scared of men while daughters of divorce tend to be "clumsily erotic" (Adams, Milner and Schrept, 1984, p. 171).

Females who lose their fathers to divorce or abandonment seek much more attention from men and had more physical contact with boys their age than girls from intact homes. They also tend to be more critical of their fathers and the opposite sex. These females constantly seek refuge for their missing father and as a result there is a constant need to be accepted by men from whom they aggressively seek attention (Grimm-Wassil, 1994, p. 147).

A study done by Pollack and Friedman (1969) that compared daughters of widows, divorcees and intact families showed the following:

There was no noticeable difference in the girls' behavior before adolescence, but then daughters of divorce sought much more attention from men and more physical contact with boys their age than girls from intact homes. Daughters of widows on the other hand avoided contact with males.

The adolescent girls of divorce had the most contact while the daughters of widows had the least. However the daughters of divorce were more critical of their fathers, while girls whose father had died felt the saddest about the loss of their father (Pollack and Friedman, 1969, p. 106).

Grimm-Wassil (1994) obtained similar results when analyzing females who lose their fathers to either death or separation. According to Grimm-Wassil:

Daughters of divorce:

- * Seek much more attention from men and boys their age.
- * Are the most critical of their fathers.
- * Have more aggressive behavior and constantly seek attention from adults and are physically aggressive to both male and female peers.

Daughters of widows:

- * Avoid contact with males.
- * Have the most positive concept of their father.
- * Feel the saddest about his loss.

Hetherington (1978) concluded these results through her study of females from three different family backgrounds. One group consisted of girls who lived at home with both parents, another included females whose fathers were deceased and the last contained females with divorced parents. The results were as follows:

Daughters of divorce sought attention from men more often, reported being

the most active sexually and had the lowest self-esteem. The effects of early father separation were more profound than later separation. While she noted different coping patterns in girls who had lost their fathers through death than in those whose loss was through divorce, she proposed that for both groups the lack of opportunity for constructive interaction with a loving, attentive father resulted in apprehension and inadequate skills in relating to men (p.320).

Adolescent girls raised in fatherless households are far more likely to engage in promiscuous sexual activity before marriage, to cohabit, to get pregnant out of wedlock and to have an abortion (Mattox, 1999, p. 3). Many lesbian relationships result more from a daughter's outright rejection by her father rather than from her identification with his masculine role (Mattox, 1999, p. 4).

Girls with absent fathers grow up without the day-by-day experience of attentive, caring and loving interaction with a man. Without this continuous sense of being valued and loved, a young girl does not thrive, but rather is stunted in her emotional development. The coping mechanisms that adolescent girls whose parents are divorced develop in response to the absence of their father include the following (Lohr, Legg, Mendell, and Reimer, 1989, p. 352):

- * Intensified separation anxiety
- * Denial and avoidance of feelings associated with the loss of a father
- * Identification with the lost object
- * Object hunger for males

The negative effects later in life have been well documented, with numerous studies indicating that girls from fatherless families develop more promiscuous attitudes and experience difficulty in forming or maintaining romantic relations later in their development (Lohr, Legg, Mendell and Reimer, 1989, p. 354). These behavioral patterns are carried with them into womanhood and may be the cause of their unfulfilling relationships with men. But before concentrating on the behavioral effects absent fathers have on female womanhood, it is important to examine the effects fatherlessness has on the academic performance of young girls.

Academic Performance of Young Girls

Father absence affects the learning process of a child, making it difficult but not impossible for them to excel academically. Studies show that females with absent fathers often have diminished cognitive, development; poor school performance, lower achievement test scores and lower IQ scores (Grimm-Wassil, 1994). Cognitive development affects how children perceive and interpret the information they are presented, thus making it difficult for them to excel if cognitive development is impeded.

The first investigator to present data suggesting an intellectual disadvantage among father-absent children was Sutherland (1930). The study involving Scottish children discovered that those who had absent fathers scored significantly lower than did those whose fathers were present. A number of more recent controlled studies are generally consistent with the supposition that father-absent children, at least

from lower class backgrounds, are less likely to function well in intelligence and aptitude tests than are father present children (United Fathers of America, 1992, p. 151). This phenomenon typically occurs as a result of the mother having to act as both breadwinner and homemaker. The duplicate role the mother plays limits the children from receiving the type of attention they need and deserve.

Maxwell (1961) reported some evidence indicating that father-absence after the age of five negatively influenced children's functioning on certain cognitive tasks by analyzing the Welchster Intelligence Test scores of a large group of eight to thirteen year old children who had been referred to a British psychiatric clinic. He found that children whose fathers had been absent since the children were five had lower test scores on tasks tapping social knowledge, perception of details, and verbal skills. Father-absence since the age of five was the only family background variable, which was consistently related to sub-test scores. Compared to father-present students, those who were father-absent performed at a lower level in terms of verbal, language and total aptitude test scores (Maxwell 1961).

Santrock (1973) presented additional evidence indicating that early father-absence can have a significant debilitating effect on cognitive functioning. Among lower-class junior high and high school children, those who became father-absent before the age of two generally scored lower on measures of IQ (Otis Quick Test) and achievement (Standard Achievement Test) tests that had been administered when they were in the third and sixth grades than did those from intact homes. The most detrimental effects occurred when father-absence was due to divorce, desertion, or separation, rather than to death. Father-absent daughters via death understand that their father did not abandon them and learn to excuse his absence as a result of passing. Consequently they do not possess hatred toward their fathers, which can affect their academic performance.

Children, who experience father absence after the age of five, more often than those fatherless before five scored below the median of WISC comprehension, vocabulary, picture completion, picture arrangement and coding subject test (Adams, Milner and Schrept, 1984, p. 133). Children's adjustment to school suggests that although fatherless children adjust less well than others, fatherlessness alone does not cause poor adjustment (Adams, Milner and Schrept, 1984, p. 140). A mother's attitude and behavior toward her child is equally important because it affects the way that the child adjusts (Kopf, 1970).

Father absence due to divorce seemed particularly detrimental, and some evidence indicated that early, long term, and complete father absence was especially likely to be related negatively to intellectual competence. More consistent results were reported from studies involving lower-class individuals and among males, but much evidence suggested that the cognitive functioning of females was also negatively affected by paternal deprivation. The family instability and financial difficulty often associated with divorce and father absence may be primary factors interfering with the child's cognitive functioning. However, the major disadvantage related to father absence for children is lessened paternal attention, including fewer opportunities to model mature decision making problem solving (Lamb, 1997, p. 148).

The decrease in father involvement typically associated with divorce can contribute to potentially serious problems in various development areas of a school aged child's functioning including academic and cognitive defects, as well as social adjustment and peer relationship handicaps and mental and physical health difficulties (Hetherington, 1978). Problems for school-aged children have been found to be generally more severe for boys and girls growing up in lower socioeconomic circumstances, but even children from affluent families are at risk. Low socioeconomic status may be an additional stressor, but it by no means transcends the risk of inadequate father involvement (Lamb 1997, p. 149).

Father-Absence and College Attendance

In a related investigation, Landy, Rosenberg and Sutton-Smith (1969) found that father-absence had a particularly disruptive effect on the quantitative aptitudes of college females. Total father-absence before age ten was highly associated with a deficit in quantitative aptitude. Their findings also suggested that father-absence during the age period from three to seven may have especially negative effects on academic aptitude.

A college education concerning fatherless females can be problematic for two reasons. First is the inability of the mother to afford the costs of a college education. In addition, it is also common for absent fathers to refuse to pay for a child's higher education, even if they have been paying regular child support (Popenoe, 1996). The second reason is more relevant to daughters than to sons. In search of a sense of security, women tend to forego college and enter the workforce. Earning money of their own gives them a sense of independence from men. Women who have watched their mothers beg for money in court for child support vow never to be put in that situation, viewing neediness with disgust and see a paycheck as freedom (Wakerman, 1984).

This phenomenon of female liberation through a paycheck is very disturbing since it limits fatherless daughters from achieving higher education and creates a falsehood that a paycheck can act as healing. Expecting to find freedom in pay is very detrimental because it does not allow fatherless females to deal with their true feelings of their father's absence

Coma (2000) observed similar behavior traits in fatherless females as they relate to college. Fatherless daughters tend to fall into one of two categories, the overachievers and the underachievers. The overachievers strive to attain a bachelor's degree, master's degree and even a Ph.D. They need to have a sense of control, making sure they reach their greatest potential. They become overachievers believing that if they accomplish more their fathers will accept them. The underachievers on the other hand are satisfied with either a high school diploma or a bachelor's degree, rarely excelling beyond that point. Typically underachievers are those who drop out of college or never attempt college. Coma (2000) suggests that fatherless daughters infrequently fall in between the two extremes presented.

Female Achievement in Mathematics

Female accomplishments in mathematics in recent years have greatly increased (Bae, 1997). In prior years female apathy in mathematics was related to the lack of father involvement or lack of incentive by family members (mainly fathers) to pursue a mathematical career. This section focuses on female relationship to mathematics and displays how lacking a father can disrupt this connection.

The old myth that females are incapable of doing math is false (Elium & Elium, 1994). Rather, many girls tend to approach problem solving differently than boys. Girls tend to approach abstract math problems verbally rather than through the visual means used more often by boys (Elium & Elium, 1994, p. 16). Reports by the American Association of University Women show that girls learn better in groups where there is verbal sharing of information among the leader or teacher and group members (Elium & Elium, 1994, p. 16).

Females are typically at a disadvantage in terms of mathematics than are boys because females are often coerced into not making mathematics a career. The times and educational practices have changed but an

extensive report compiled by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) concludes that girls are still at a disadvantage in today's education system. According to this report, the belief that girls and boys have identical experiences is entirely erroneous (Elium & Elium, 1994, p. 16). Other factors that influence young girls' decisions not to pursue mathematics or other traditionally masculine areas such as science are: the lack of attention given to girls by teachers in the classroom, education being a spectator sport for girls, traditional sex roles taught along with the regular curriculum material, and lastly and probably most important, different expectations for girls affect their performance in math and science.

Various researches show that classroom teachers not only call on boys more often than girls, but they listen when boys call out answers. Because teachers assume girls will be conscientious students, they tend to encourage boys more often by commenting on their work, offering suggestions and giving praise (Elium & Elium, 1994, p. 73). This greatly affects female achievement in mathematics and other academic areas since girls are not given adequate attention or taught to attempt that which is foreign to them. Females are restricted to societal expectations of them and are rarely asked to go outside this frame.

Female achievement and success in mathematics and other male dominated fields of study can be nurtured based on the amount of support received from fathers. The father's support can be especially important for his daughter since he can serve as a clear counterforce to prevent male biases (Biller, 1993, p. 147).

Security and Stability

Security is important for all humans but for females it is vital for growth (Griffin, 1998, p. 21). This paternal protection enables females to thrive in relative safety, enhancing their chances of growing into healthy adulthood (Elium & Elium, 1994, p. 68). Positive paternal relationships can be especially crucial for daughters in their efforts to become competent, achievement-oriented and successful in nontraditional educational and career areas (Biller, 1993, p. 150). The positive paternal relationship a female has increases her chances of venturing into challenging territory.

Fatherless daughters compared to those with present father figures are in higher risk of teenage pregnancy, college drop out and low self-esteem. In addition fatherless daughters are in higher risk of suicide, homelessness and disorders. According to Getting Men Involved: The Newsletter of the Bay Area Male Involvement Network, (Spring 1997):

- * 63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes.
- * 90% of all homeless runaway children are from fatherless homes
- * 85% of all children who exhibit behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes.
- * 80% of rapists motivated by displaced anger come from fatherless homes.
- * 71% of all high school dropouts are from fatherless homes.
- * 75% of all adolescents' patients in chemical abuse centers come from fatherless homes.
- * 70% of juveniles in state-oriented institutions come from fatherless homes.

* 85% of all youths in prisons grew up in a fatherless home.

* Fatherless children are 20% less likely to attend college.

These disturbing statistics reflect how important a role fathers play in the lives of their children ensuring that they are not negatively influenced. Unfortunately, fatherless daughters occasionally find difficulties combating these alarming statistics because their father support is so scarce. Fathers have especially important roles in supporting the development of a constructive sense of assertiveness and independent in their daughters (Biller, 1993, p. 150). A secure base provided by fathers brings stability to their daughters' lives ultimately allowing them to be more focused.

Father stability is a major factor in his daughter's life. A father who is not grounded and rooted is doing his daughter a disservice by bringing chaos into her life. Much of the development, strengths and depth of a woman's character depends on her father's stability (Griffin, 1998, p. 25). A grounded father is able to affect his daughter's decisions by teaching the choices she makes today will affect her tomorrow.

Inconstant father-daughter relations can have a devastating effect on a female's life by making her more vulnerable to outside influences. Daughters of single parents in comparison to those from intact homes are:

* 53% more likely to marry as teenagers

* 111% more likely to have children as teenagers

* 164% more likely to be a single parent

* 92% more likely to divorce if they marry

Fathers who do not play an active role in their daughters' development and provide them the security needed, makes their daughters' growth process difficult. This activity forces the mother to act as both parents, consequently putting a strain on the mother-daughter relationship. Nevertheless secure foundations provided by the father to his daughter can alleviate certain stresses present in single parent households.

Secure Foundations

A present supportive father can not be replaced, which is the main reason researchers suggest many females never get over the loss of their father (Grimm-Wassil, 1994, p. 147). Available fathers who talked to, praised, and responded to their daughters boost their girls' social responsiveness and positive feelings about self beyond the level of those girls whose fathers were uninvolved (Grimm-Wassil, 1994, p. 145).

Secure foundations provided by the father along with his influences provide females with a confident base, enabling her to be successful. Grimm-Wassil (1994) suggests that fathers are influential in specific areas of child development:

1) Fathers encourage independence; they are generally less protective, promoting exploration and risk taking' and model aggressive or assertive behaviors.

- 2) Fathers expand the child horizon; they are the link to the "outside world" through their jobs.
- 3) Fathers serve as "alternative parent"; they can improve the quality of the mother's parenting by reducing her stress and stepping in to give the mother a break during a crisis.
- 4) Fathers are strict disciplinarians; they accept fewer "excuses" and demand more of their children at each stage.
- 5) Fathers are men; treating their children respectfully can put the child at ease with other men throughout his or her life.

Daughters need the example of what a man really is, how one is supposed to act, what a man needs and how he thinks (Griffin, 1998, p. 29). Fathers are the key to teaching their daughters about men. Research has suggested that most women who see their mothers being abused will themselves become abused in adulthood (Griffin, 1998). Positive secure father-daughter relationships allow females the confidence needed to be successful in their effort as well as achieve their goals.

Conclusion

This paper revealed the effects females encounter as a result of not having a present father figure. There is no substitution for a father's love and while many females are able to succeed there still exists some part of them that longs to be 'daddy's little girl.' (Grimm-Wassil, 1994). Inevitably our fathers determine how we view the opposite sex, the outside world and ourselves.

This research paper exposed how father absence affects female development and college attendance by affecting their cognitive development and school performance, interaction with both children and adults, interest and success in mathematics, risk of teenage pregnancy and high school drop out, and their ability to make sound decisions. It is believed that a father's absence will limit his daughters from achieving her goals; fortunately this limitation is not always true.

The attitude of [the] mother, the only present parent, can make a tremendous difference in the emotional health of the child(ren) (Adams, Milner and Schrept, 1984, p. 116). The efforts of single mothers may explain why all fatherless daughters are not teenage mothers, college dropouts, or a menace to society. The role a mother plays in her daughter's life can replenish some of the nurturing that was lost when the father departed.

Fatherlessness is a social problem brought on by the breakdown of traditional family. The victims are innocent children who have little voice in changing public attitude and policy. Blankenhorn (1995) studied the epidemic of fatherless America and concluded it is our most urgent social problem. He claims it weakens the family, harms children, causes or aggravates our worst social problem, and makes individual adult happiness harder to achieve' (Soberman, 2000, p. 3).