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Vulnerabilities and Strengths of Lesbian and Homosexual Mexican Adolescents to dating violence.

Vulnerabilidades y fortalezas de las y los adolescentes mexicanos lesbianas y homosexuales ante la violencia en el noviazgo.

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Resumen: Este trabajo explora la violencia en el noviazgo entre parejas adolescentes del mismo sexo y compara la prevalencia de las diferentes expresiones de esta violencia (emocional, física y sexual) entre parejas heterosexuales y parejas del mismo sexo. Además, identificamos aquellas características de los adolescentes homosexuales que reducen o aumentan su vulnerabilidad a la violencia en el noviazgo, examinando el papel que juegan diversos elementos de empoderamiento, como la autoestima, la agencia, las actitudes de rol de género, el poder social y el poder sexual de los adolescentes. Se desarrollaron análisis descriptivos, así como modelos de regresión logística bivariados y multivariados, utilizando datos de la Encuesta de Noviazgo, Empoderamiento y Salud Sexual y Reproductiva en Adolescentes de la Escuela Secundaria en México (ENESSAEP 2014), una encuesta representativa de tres estados de la República Mexicana: Morelos, Jalisco y Puebla. Los hallazgos confirman que las prevalencias de los tres tipos de violencia en el noviazgo (emocional, física y sexual) son significativamente más altas para los adolescentes con parejas del mismo sexo que para los adolescentes heterosexuales. Las experiencias de violencia emocional recibidas y presenciadas en el hogar son más frecuentes en la vida de los adolescentes gays y lesbianas, y estas experiencias a su vez muestran asociaciones significativas y mayores con el riesgo de los tres tipos de violencia en el noviazgo para ellos. A excepción del empoderamiento sexual, la mayoría de los indicadores de empoderamiento mostraron asociaciones significativas y negativas con el riesgo de los tres tipos de violencia en el noviazgo para los adolescentes heterosexuales, y en algunos casos también para los jóvenes gays o lesbianas. Es necesario seguir investigando sobre el papel del empoderamiento de los adolescentes como un proceso relevante para prevenir la violencia en el noviazgo y para proporcionar a los jóvenes recursos clave para identificar y afrontar las relaciones violentas, y particularmente en el caso de los jóvenes de los grupos de diversidad sexual.

Palabras clave: Violencia en el noviazgo, Adolescentes, diversidad sexual, empoderamiento de los adolescentes, México

Abstract: This paper explores dating violence among same-sex adolescent couples and compares the prevalence's of the different expressions of this violence (emotional, physical, and sexual) between heterosexual couples and same-sex couples. Additionally, we identify those characteristics of homosexual adolescents that reduce or increase their vulnerability to dating violence, examining the role played by various elements of empowerment, such as self-esteem, agency, gender role attitudes, social power, and adolescent sexual power. Descriptive analysis as well as bivariate and multivariate logistic regression models were developed using data from the Survey on Dating, Empowerment and Sexual and Reproductive Health in Adolescent in High School in Mexico (ENESSAEP 2014 in Spanish), a survey representative of three Mexican states in México: Morelos, Jalisco and Puebla. The findings confirm that the prevalence's of the three types of dating violence (emotional, physical, and sexual) are significantly higher for adolescents with same-sex partners than for heterosexual adolescents. The experiences of emotional violence received and witnessed at home are more frequent in the lives of gay and lesbian adolescents, and these experiences in turn show significant and larger associations with the risk of all three types of dating violence for them. Except for sexual empowerment, most indicators of empowerment showed significant and negative associations with the risk of the three types of dating violence for heterosexual adolescents, and in some cases for gay or lesbian youths too. It is necessary further research on the role of adolescent's empowerment as a relevant process to prevent dating violence and to provide young people with key resources to identify and deal with violent relationships, and particularly in the case of youth from the sexual diversity groups.

Key words: Dating violence, Adolescents, sexual diversity, adolescents' empowerment, México .

1. LITERATURE REVIEW AND BACKGROUND

Compared to research on IPV in heterosexual couples, the literature on this topic regarding sexual minorities is limited. Several aspects might have been defining this situation. On one hand, the interpretation of IPV as gender violence is less evident when the couple is not integrated by a man and a woman, who have been portrayed as the aggressor and the victim in a good portion of the research on this topic. It has been argued too that research on IPV in couples of the same sex might be understood as a questioning of the feminist premise of gender differences and patriarchy as the root of this violence (Costa et al, 2011 cited by Barros et al, 2019). Additionally, it has been pointed the fear among the sexual minorities that opening this situation might contribute to enlarge the discrimination and prejudice against non-heterosexual persons (Burke & Follingstad, 1999; Holt, 2014).

Previous research conducted mainly in the United States has shown evidence of greater exposure to the risk of DV among homosexual adolescents (Brown & Herman, 2015; Messinger, 2011). Data from a study developed by the Urban Institute Justice Policy Center in the United States show that 59% of homosexual youth receive psychological DV (versus 46% of heterosexuals), 43% receive physical violence (versus 29% of heterosexuals) and 23% receive sexual violence (versus 12% of heterosexual youth) (Dank et al, 2014). Similarly, a study using data from nationally representative sample of students from 9 to 12 grades in U.S. participating in the 2015 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) found that gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth had greater prevalence and frequency of physical and sexual DV compared with heterosexual youths (O'Malley Olsen, Vivolo-Kantor & Kann, 2020). Also, research on 10,500 young respondents from Massachusetts found higher prevalence of DV among sexual minority students (Martin-Storey, 2015).

Among the non-heterosexual groups, the bisexual populations have been found to be the most vulnerable to partner abuse. A study developed on a convenience sample of adolescents attending a GLBT rally held in an urban area of the U.S. observed that bisexual males had greater risk of any type of abuse while bisexual females had greater risks of experiencing sexual abuse, compared to heterosexual youths (Freedner et al, 2002; Messinger, 2011).

In Mexico the existing research has been based on small samples of people from the sexual diversity. A study developed with 29 lesbian and gay adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age from the state of Colima shows that DV is present and is bidirectional among these youths (Tomero-Méndez et al, 2020). Another qualitative study based on a non-probabilistic convenience sample of 15 non-heterosexual youths (aged 15-27 years) in Veracruz found that all youths had experienced IPV as well as a close link between that situation and the experiences of violence witnessed and lived in their family environments (Ronzón-Tirado et al, 2017). And similarly, a study with 42 people from the LGBTT+ community in Nayarit found that 98% of the sample reported having

been victims of IPV and 90% having exercised violence towards their partner. Finally, research developed with a sample of 50 young lesbian and gay students identified that the frequency of the three types of IPV analyzed (psychological, physical, and sexual violence) is higher among men than among women (Robles and Toribio, 2017).

Some studies have indicated that among same-sex couples, is more frequent the non-identification or recognition of expressions of violence as such than in heterosexual couples (Hassouneh & Glass, 2008; Santaya & Walters, 2011; Walters, 2011). In this sense, a recent study conducted in Mexico City among homosexual men over 18 years of age diagnosed with HIV reveals a high prevalence of IPV received and exercised (83.8% and 74.3%, respectively) but a much lower perception of these behaviors as violence, since only 29.5% considered that they had been victims of IPV and just 22% considered that they had exercised it (Alderete-Aguilar et al, 2021).

1.1. Factors associated to dating violence:

While it has been documented that many of the factors associated with the risk of IPV are shared by both homosexual and heterosexual couples, such as violence received and witnessed in the family of origin, drug and/or alcohol use and having been sexually initiated, low levels of education, as well as low self-esteem (Barret & St. Pierre, 2013; Eaton et al, 2008; Kaukinen, 2014; Klostermann et al, 2011; O'Keeffe, 2005), several authors have also emphasized the existence of exclusive factors associated with the risk of violence in same-sex couples (Eaton et al, 2008; Kaukinen, 2014; Klostermann et al, 2011; O'Keeffe, 2005; Pierre, 2013;) as those individuals have experienced circumstances and conditions associated with their sexual orientation, such as fear of disclosure and situations of discrimination based on their sexual identity (Ard and Makadon, 2011 cited by Alderete-Aguilar, et al, 2021; Balsam & Szymanski, 2005; Edwards & Sylaska, 2012; Graham et al, 2019).

The experience of heteronormative social pressures appears as a consistent and significant factor that increases the risk of IPV among men who have sex with men in six different countries: United States, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, South Africa, and Brazil (Finneran et al, 2012). Nonconformity with heterosexual norms frequently leads to exposure to teasing, discrimination and bullying and can favor the development of internalized homophobia, which in turn has been linked to a greater risk of IPV (Balsam & Szymanski, 2005 cited by Gillum & DiFulvio, 2012; Carvalho et al, 2011; Martin-Storey & Fromme, 2021). On the other hand, social homophobia (or homophobic context) also introduces pressure in the dating relationship between young people of sexual diversity, who experience it as societal homophobia or/and internalized homophobia (Gillum & DiFulvio, 2012; Marrow, 2004; Pepper & Sand, 2015), which leads to a higher risk of violence and greater difficulty, when it occurs, to report it to family, friends or, even more difficult, to authorities (Santoniccolo et al, 2021; Walters, 2011).

Another factor associated with the risk of partner violence in same-sex couples is the negotiation of socially prescribed gender roles, such as the dominance of the male figure in the couple or the expectation, among couples composed of two women, that between them there should be an almost natural mutual understanding, because of the supposed shared connection between two women who share the same feminine condition (Gilles & DiFulvio, 2012).

Finally, even though some empirical evidences have been documented about adolescent's empowerment and the protective role it may play regarding the risk of DV among heterosexual youths (Bandiera et al, 2013 and Sarnquist et al., 2014 cited by Ellsberg et al, 2018; Casique, 2018), to our knowledge the existing research on DV among adolescents of sexual diversity has not addressed the role that diverse elements of adolescent's empowerment, like autonomy, self-esteem, gender-role attitudes or agency might play in the risk of DV for these populations.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Data

The results of this paper are based on the information gathered in a broad survey conducted in 2014 as part of a Conacyt-funded project that aimed to measure adolescent empowerment in Mexico. This survey estimates the level of adolescent empowerment and the links of this empowerment process, dating violence, and some aspects of their sexual and reproductive life. The Survey on Dating, Empowerment and Sexual Health of Adolescent High School Students (ENESSAEP, 2014), was applied to 13,427 high school students between 15 and 20 years old in three Mexican states: Morelos, Jalisco, and Puebla. The schools and the students were randomly selected, and the questionnaire was self-filled. In this paper we use the total sample and we identify the subsample of adolescents who indicated that they had a same-sex partner (n=279; 159 males and 120 females), in order to compare some characteristics between non heterosexual and heterosexual youths.

2.2. Methods

Using descriptive analysis techniques (chi-square and t-test) we explored the differences in sociodemographic characteristics between the sample of homosexual and heterosexual adolescents, as well as in the levels of empowerment of both groups and the prevalence of different types of DV. Factor analysis was used to estimate the different empowerment indexes, as well as the indexes of Support from partner and Approval of adolescent sex.

Given the small sample size, we refrained from performing multivariate regressions with all the independent variables at the same time; therefore, to examine the associations of the various sociodemographic variables analyzed with the risk of DV, we relied only on bivariate regressions. For the analysis of the associations between the

five estimated empowerment indicators and the risk of IPV we did develop multivariate models but including only these five continuous variables. All models distinguish by sexual orientation but group men and women together to preserve sample size.

2.3. Dependent Variables

Three different expressions of DV (emotional, physical, and sexual violence) are assessed using the revised version of the Straus Tactical Conflict Scale, widely used in studies on IPV (Straus et al, 1996).

2.3.1. Independent variables

Diverse sociodemographic variables as age, socioeconomic status, lives with both parents, emotional and physical violence received at home during childhood, emotional and physical violence currently received at home, age at first sex, number of sexual partners, length of courtship (months), support from partner (Index 0 -1), approval of adolescent sex (index 0 -1), sex with partner and victim of attempted forced sex ever were included in the bivariate regression models to explore their associations with emotional, physical and DV.

Additionally, we explored the association between each of the five indicators of adolescent empowerment estimated and the three types of DV:

Social Power Index, which accounts for the attachment or sense of belonging of young people to their community and for the confidence they have in their own capacity and ability to do things to improve it (Peterson et al, 2008; Oliva et al, 2012). This index is based on ten items like “I feel a member of my community”, “I think I could work with other young people and adults in my town to make things better” and “I feel proud to be part of my colony or community”, with four possible answers ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.”

The Self-Steem Index refers to the level of approval or disapproval that the adolescents have of themselves and their worth as individuals (Zimmerman 1997, Bednar 1991). This index uses the answers to nine questions on this regard, as “I am generally satisfied with myself”, “Sometimes I think I'm no good at all”, and “I feel at ease with my body”.

The Agency Index, a measure of the ability of people to act on the things they value and the goals that are important to them (Malhotra, 2003; Sen,1999), which we measured through nine questions like “I do what I think is best for me no matter what others think”, “It is difficult for me to publicly express my opinion” and “I feel that I control my life. The four possible answers ranged from “never” to “always” and the resulting additive index shows a good consistency.

The Index of Egalitarian Gender Roles Attitudes, which characterizes young people in terms of their egalitarian gender attitudes. Estimates are based on a set of 14 statements such as: “it is the woman’s responsibility to prevent pregnancy;” “the man

should always have the last word;" "men need to have more sex than women;" and "women should not be the ones to initiate sex." There were four possible answers on the Likert-type scale range from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

The Index of Sexual Power permits us to estimate the capacity of everyone to act in an independent way vis-á-vis her/his sexual partner (Pulerwitz et al., 2000; Peterson, 2010; Tolman, 2005). The calculation for this indicator was based on the answers to nine items like "you have sex without protection because your partner prefers it that way;" "you feel secure and in control during sex;" and "you make sure to buy condoms". The possible answers were a five-points Likert scale that ranges from "always" to "never".

3. RESULTS

3.1. Sociodemographic characteristics of adolescents in the sample.

Table 1 presents the sample characteristics of the 13,557 adolescents who satisfactorily completed the survey. Only 2% declared having a same sex partner. According to the distribution of these sociodemographic characteristics, several variables suggest a greater vulnerability of gay and lesbian adolescents, like a significantly earlier age of sexual debut (14.9 vs 15.3 years), a significantly greater number of sexual partners (3.9 vs 2.7), and an also significantly larger proportion of older boyfriend/girlfriend, factors that have shown positive associations with the risk of DV in previous research (Birkett et al, 2009; Dank et al, 2014).

Table 1. Differences in sociodemographic characteristics between heterosexual and homosexual/lesbian adolescents¹.

Mean values of continuous variables			
	Heterosexual	Gay/Lesbian	Sig.
Age at first sex (years)	15.25	14.93	0.014
Number of sexual partners	2.66	3.95	0.000
Support from partner (0 -1)	0.79	0.88	0.000
Approval of adolescent sex (0 -1)	0.54	0.60	0.000
Distribution of categorical variables			
	Heterosexual	Gay/Lesbian	Chi ² Sig.
Lives with both parents			
No	30.49	27.86	
Yes	69.51	72.14	0.000
Emotional violence at home			
No	56.66	55.1	
Yes	43.34	44.9	0.002

¹ Source: Own calculations based on ENESSAEP 2014.

Physical violence at home			
No	91.42	94.02	
Yes	8.58	5.98	0.000
Received EV at home during childhood			
No	77.78	72.5	
Yes	22.22	27.5	0.000
Received PV at home during childhood			
No	72.2	74.72	
Yes	27.8	25.28	0.000
Currently receiving EV at home			
No	82.17	79.88	
Yes	17.83	20.12	0.000
Currently receiving PV at home			
No	94.88	94.66	
Yes	5.12	5.34	n.s.
Socioeconomic status			
High	22.92	18.04	
Medium	27.15	28.79	
Low	25.61	36.98	
Very low	24.32	16.19	0.000
Age difference with partner			
Younger boyfriend/girlfriend	22.66	15.71	
Same age	34.32	26.38	
Older boyfriend/girlfriend	43.02	57.91	0.000
Educational level of partner			
Middle school or less	33.27	31.31	
Highschool	62.74	60.28	
Bachelor's degree or more	4	8.41	0.000
Sex with current partner			
No	42.08	43.27	
Yes	57.92	56.73	n.s.
Attempted forced sex			
No	94	84.01	
Yes	6	15.99	0.000

Additionally, in the sample of adolescents with same-sex partners the percentages of having witnessed emotional violence at home (44.9%), of having received emotional violence at home during childhood (27.5%) and currently (20.1%), are significantly higher than for heterosexual adolescents. Moreover, the percentage of homosexual adolescents who had an experience of attempted forced sex prior to their current dating relationship is almost three times higher than the percentage for heterosexual adolescents (16% vs 6%).

However, we also observe that a few aspects emerge as potential protective factors to IPV for them: homosexual or lesbian adolescents live with both parents in a larger proportion than heterosexual adolescents (72.14% vs 69.51%), testified to physical violence in their homes to a lesser extent (5.98% vs 8.58%), and similarly received less physical violence at home during childhood (25.28% vs 27.80%).

3.2. Prevalence of Different types of Dating Violence by Sexual Orientation

Table 2. Prevalence of Dating Victimization by sexual orientation and sex².

	Total			Males			Females		
	Hetero	Homo	Chi ² _Sig.	Hetero	Homo	Chi ² _Sig.	Hetero	Lesbian	Chi ² _Sig.
Emotional V.	45.2	55.48	0.000	44.28	54.57	0.000	45.98	56.95	0.000
Physical V.	14.69	13.47	0.001	17.41	13.23 *	0.000	12.41	13.87 *	0.006
Sexual V.	8.68	15.9	0.000	10.27	22.94*	0.000	7.33	4.63*	0.000
* n < 30									

The results indicate significantly higher prevalence of emotional DV and sexual dating victimization by adolescents with same-sex partners while physical DV is more prevalent for heterosexual adolescents (Table 2). When sex is introduced, the prevalence's of emotional and sexual violence are indeed higher for homosexual males -more than double in the case of sexual violence- that the observed for heterosexual males. For lesbian women, the prevalences of emotional and physical violence are higher than for women in heterosexual couples, but sexual violence is lower for lesbian than for heterosexual women. However, these results considering the sex of the respondents, should be taken with great caution, since distinguishing by sex the sample of lesbian and homosexual adolescents results in very small subsamples (159 males and 120 females).

3.3. Indicators of adolescent empowerment

In general, as a group, homosexual and lesbian adolescents are at a disadvantage with respect to heterosexual adolescents in terms of mean self-esteem and in terms of social empowerment but show significantly higher scores in gender egalitarian attitudes and in sexual power (See Table 3). No significant difference was found regarding agency between the two groups of youths.

By sex the data shows that homosexual adolescents have lower self-esteem mean (0.77 vs 0.79), but more egalitarian attitudes (0.87 vs 0.77) and greater sexual power

² Source: Own calculations based on ENESSAEP 2014.

means (0.46 vs 0.33) than heterosexual males. On the other hand, lesbian female adolescents show less social empowerment mean (0.78 vs 0.82) but more sexual power mean (0.34 vs 0.23) than heterosexual female adolescents.

Table 3. Mean Values of Adolescents Empowerment Indexes by Sexual Orientation and Sex³.

Dimension	Group	TOTAL			MALES			FEMALES		
		Obs	Mean	t-test (sig)	Obs	Mean	t-test (sig)	Obs	Mean	t-test (sig)
	Heterosexuals	13,148	0.81		6,207	0.80		6,941	0.82	
Social Empowerment	Gay/Lesbian	279	0.80		159	0.81		120	0.78	
	Difference		0.01	n.s.		-0.01	n.s.		0.03	0.001
	Heterosexuals	13,148	0.78		6,207	0.79		6,941	0.76	
Self-Esteem	Gay/Lesbian	279	0.76		159	0.77		120	0.75	
	Difference		0.02	0.010		0.02	0.004		0.02	n.s.
	Heterosexuals	13,148	0.78		6,207	0.80		6,941	0.76	
Agency	Gay/Lesbian	279	0.78		159	0.80		120	0.76	
	Difference		0.00	n.s.		0.00	n.s.		0.00	n.s.
	Heterosexuals	13,148	0.80		6,207	0.77		6,941	0.82	
Egalitarian Gender	Gay/Lesbian	279	0.83		159	0.84		120	0.82	
Roles attitudes	Difference		-0.03	0.000		-0.07	0.000		0.01	n.s.
	Heterosexuals	13,148	0.27		6,207	0.33		6,941	0.23	
Sexual Power	Gay/Lesbian	279	0.41		159	0.46		120	0.34	
	Difference		-0.14	0.000		-0.13	0.000		-0.12	0.001

These values illustrate that in terms of empowerment there are significant differences between adolescents according to their sexual orientation and gender, and that these differences are complex, as they refer to some dimensions in which heterosexual adolescents have higher levels of empowerment (such as self-esteem in the case of males and social empowerment for females) but, at the same time, the gay and lesbian adolescents are better off in terms of sexual power (both males and females) and more egalitarian attitudes towards gender roles (only lesbian adolescents).

3.4. Factors associated with the risk of dating violence. The role of adolescent empowerment.

To review the factors significantly associated with the risk of each type of DV, we used first bivariate logistic regressions models to explore the role of each

³ Source: Own calculations based on ENESSAEP 2014.

sociodemographic factor (Table 4) and then we estimated multiple logistic regression model incorporating only as independent variables the indicators of adolescent empowerment (Table 5). Given the small sample size in the case of homosexual adolescents (n=279) we do not attempt to perform multivariate regression models with all these variables simultaneously.

In general, we identified the same sociodemographic factors significantly associated with the risk of DV for both groups (heterosexuals and non-heterosexuals), although we found a greater number of variables with positive associations with DV for the sample of heterosexual adolescents, probably attributable to the limited sample size of gay and lesbians adolescents, which may be limiting the finding of significant relationships in some cases (Table 4). Nevertheless, it is possible to pinpoint some differences that allow us to visualize some aspects in which homosexual adolescents appear more vulnerable to DV than the heterosexual ones.

For example, experiences of emotional violence and physical violence received at home, both during childhood and in the present, are significantly associated with higher risks of DV for both heterosexual and homosexual adolescents, but they are particularly relevant in the case of homosexual adolescents, since the impact of these factors is bigger for them, as it is evidenced by the larger odds ratios (see Table 4).

Table 4. Factors associated to the risk of Dating Violence by sexual orientation. Bivariate logistic regressions⁴.

Variables	EMOTIONAL VIOLENCE				PHYSICAL VIOLENCE				SEXUAL VIOLENCE			
	Heterosexuals		Gay/Lesbian		Heterosexuals		Gay/Lesbian		Heterosexuals		Gay/Lesbian	
	O.R.	Sig.	O.R.	Sig.	O.R.	Sig.	O.R.	Sig.	O.R.	Sig.	O.R.	Sig.
Socioeconomic stratus												
Very Low (ref)	1		1		1		1		1		1	
Low	1.1683	**	0.5824	n.s.	1.2195	**	1.3107	n.s.	0.9905	n.s.	0.4577	n.s.
Medium	1.0654	n.s.	0.6279	n.s.	1.0572	n.s.	2.4857	†	0.8494	†	0.3390	*
High	0.9124	†	0.6214	n.s.	0.9365	n.s.	1.8125	n.s.	0.6816	***	0.6405	n.s.
Lives with both parents	0.7793	***	0.5979	*	0.7907	***	0.5195	†	0.8522	*	1.1805	n.s.
Received emotional Violence during childhood	1.5427	***	1.7177	*	1.9121	***	2.5060	**	2.0066	***	1.1624	n.s.
Received Physical Violence during childhood	1.4790	***	1.9452	*	1.6870	***	5.6131	***	1.5896	***	2.0483	†
Currently receives emotional violence at home	1.4698	***	2.3381	**	1.8806	***	3.9481	***	1.7272	***	1.2515	n.s.
Currently receives physical violence at home	1.5046	***	0.8750	n.s.	2.0327	***	2.0278	n.s.	1.8969	***	0.7475	n.s.
Age at first sex	0.9420	**	1.1191	n.s.	0.8971	***	0.9445	n.s.	0.9048	***	0.9002	n.s.
Number of sexual partners	1.0165	n.s.	1.0085	n.s.	1.0227	*	1.0305	n.s.	1.0581	***	1.0812	*

⁴ Source: ENESSAEP 2014.

Sex with current partner	2.1863	***	2.1667	*	1.3794	***	1.2267	n.s.	1.2347	*	0.7209	n.s.
Aproval of adolescent sex (Index)	4.4133	***	3.9293	*	4.8048	***	1.8002	n.s.	8.9951	***	6.3833	*
Someone ever tried to force you to have sex	0.9306	†	0.7582	n.s.	0.9518	n.s.	0.9445	n.s.	0.8933	**	0.7964	n.s.
Duration of current relationship	1.0576	***	1.0189	n.s.	1.0326	***	1.0266	†	1.0159	***	0.9545	n.s.
Support from partner (Index)	19.1619	***	0.3256	n.s.	4.4482	***	0.0007	***	2.8167	***	0.0016	**
† p<0.10 * p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001												

For homosexual or lesbian adolescents, belonging to a middle socioeconomic stratum (compared to belonging to a very low stratum) multiplies the risk of physical violence 2.49 times, while for heterosexual adolescents no significant association is evident. And, interestingly, belonging to the same middle socioeconomic stratum significantly reduces the risk of sexual violence 15% and 66% respectively, for heterosexuals and homosexual's youths.

A surprising finding is that a larger partner support represents, for homosexual adolescents, a protective factor against the risk of physical and sexual DV (as will be expected). But amazingly, that greater partner support means, for heterosexual adolescents, a greater risk of all three types of DV.

Living with both parents appears, for all adolescents, as a factor that reduces the risk of the three types of DV, except in the case of sexual violence for homosexual adolescents, where no significant association is found with the condition of living with both parents.

Most indicators of empowerment show significant associations with the risk of the three types of DV analyzed for heterosexual adolescents, except for agency that has no significant association with sexual violence (Table 5). In the case of homosexual or lesbian adolescents some empowerment dimensions show no associations with any type of violence, like social empowerment and agency; other dimensions show association with just one type of violence: self-esteem is significantly associated with emotional violence, agency is only marginally associated with physical violence and egalitarian gender roles attitudes are significantly associated with sexual violence; only sexual empowerment shows significant association with the risk of the three types of violence (emotional, physical and sexual) for homosexual or lesbian adolescents.

It is significant to notice that while most dimensions of empowerment play a protective role reducing the relative risks of DV, sexual empowerment appears as a factor that increases the risks of emotional violence (4.7 and 2.3 times larger for each unitary increment for hetero and homosexuals respectively), of physical violence (3.1 and 2.3 times larger for each unitary increment for hetero and homosexuals

respectively) and of sexual violence (4.0 and 4.1 times larger for each unitary increment for hetero and homosexuals respectively) (Table 5).

Table 5. Empowerment Indicators associated to the risk of Dating Violence by sexual orientation. Multiple logistic regressions⁵.

Variables	EMOTIONAL VIOLENCE				PHYSICAL VIOLENCE				SEXUAL VIOLENCE			
	Heterosexuals		Gay/Lesbian		Heterosexuals		Gay/Lesbian		Heterosexuals		Gay/Lesbian	
	O.R.	Sig.	O.R.	Sig.	O.R.	Sig.	O.R.	Sig.	O.R.	Sig.	O.R.	Sig.
Social Empowerment	0.7121	*	0.2256	n.s.	0.518	**	0.984	n.s.	0.537	*	1.494	n.s.
Self-esteem	0.5225	**	0.1273	*	0.432	**	0.807	n.s.	0.302	***	0.067	n.s.
Agency	0.6012	*	0.7906	n.s.	0.574	*	0.048	†	0.743	n.s.	5.362	n.s.
Egalitarian Gender Roles Attitudes	0.1419	***	0.9268	n.s.	0.174	***	1.060	n.s.	0.098	***	0.018	*
Sexual Power	4.6654	***	2.3483	*	3.134	***	2.317	†	4.032	***	4.124	**
† p<0.10 * p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001												

At the same time, some other findings point out some characteristics that particularly might protect the homosexuals and lesbians' adolescents from DV. On one hand the larger egalitarian attitudes to gender roles reduces the risk of sexual violence for all adolescents, but the decline, for every unitary increment in the corresponding index, is larger for homosexual/lesbian adolescents than for heterosexual ones (98% vs 90%).

Also, we identify some aspects that seem to pose larger vulnerability for DV among heterosexual adolescents than among homosexual/lesbian adolescents, like the approval of sexual relationships among adolescents; this factor increases the risk of all three types of DV for all adolescents, however, the increased risk is of greater magnitude for heterosexual adolescents.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

When contrasting the sociodemographic characteristics of gay or lesbian adolescents with those of heterosexual adolescents, some indicators of more adverse conditions emerge for non-heterosexual youth, such as a more frequent experience of emotional violence in the home of origin (direct and indirect) during childhood and in the present, as well as a greater frequency of risky sexual behaviors, which may have an impact on a greater vulnerability to victimization in dating relationships. All these characteristics profile the group of non-heterosexual adolescents as a population with larger risks for experiencing DV, consistent with previous research findings in other contexts (Langenderfer, 2016; Martin-Storey 2015).

⁵ Source: ENESSAEP 2014.

In fact, the findings of this research confirm that the prevalence's of the three types of DV (emotional, physical, and sexual) are significantly higher for adolescents with same-sex partners than for heterosexual adolescents, a result that is in line with previous research findings in several countries (Brown & Herman, 2010; Dank et al, 2014; Freedner et al, 2002; McKay et al, 2019; Martin-Storey, 2015).

Several factors converge in this situation. First, experiences of emotional violence received and witnessed in the home are more frequent in the lives of gay and lesbian adolescents, and these experiences in turn show a significant association with risk for all three types of DV. This finding confirms the results of another previous study in Mexico with sexually diverse youth between the ages of 15 and 27, which identifies the close link between IPV experienced by youth and violence witnessed or received in their homes of origin (Ronzón-Tirado et al, 2017) and of similar findings in other contexts (Friedman et al; 2011; Lichter & McCloskey, 2004). Also, gay and lesbian adolescents show lower self-esteem than heterosexual youths, and the result corroborate that higher self- esteem significantly reduces the risk of emotional, physical and sexual DV, similarly to previous findings in Belgium (Van Ouytsel et al, 2017)

Compared to heterosexual adolescents, gay and lesbian youth have greater sexual experience (earlier sexual onset and higher average number of sexual partners), greater acceptance of sexual relationships among youth their age, and higher levels of sexual empowerment. Although greater sexual empowerment may give adolescents greater experience and control over their sexual lives (Kohler, Manhart, & Lafferty, 2008), it is evident that this also implies potential conflict and greater risk of IPV, according to the results of the bivariate regressions. Such findings are consistent with previous research findings that earlier sexual initiation and larger number of sexual partners have shown significant and positive associations with risk of dating victimization (Silverman et al, 2001). This raises a complex meaning of sexual empowerment for all adolescents, regarding their sexual orientation, and of each aspect analyzed in relation to sexual activity. These results reflect how sexuality constitutes a dimension of human life about which innumerable taboos and prejudices persist, elaborating around it ambivalent social responses that sometimes reward and sometimes punish its expressions, in a clearly differentiated manner according to sex and age. Sexual empowerment of adolescents can hardly lead them to a condition of lower risk of dating violence as well as greater sexual health when traditional gender roles and heteronormative stereotypes of sexuality prevail socially. But the incorporation of sexual education programs can facilitate shifts in the meanings and possibilities of adolescents' sexual empowerment (Grose, Grabe & Kohfeldt, 2013).

At the same time, the finding that the experience of having been victims of some attempt at forced sex (prior to the current dating relationship) is almost three times higher for lesbian and gay adolescents than for heterosexual adolescents confirms for Mexican adolescents what previous research has pointed out in other countries: that

sexually diverse youth are particularly vulnerable to experiences of early sexual violence (Atteberry-Ash et al, 2020; Friedaman et al, 2011; Kann et al, 2016).

In terms of the associations found between adolescents' empowerment indicators and the risk of dating violence, this work contributes to show that except for sexual empowerment most aspects of the empowerment process (self-esteem, agency and egalitarian gender roles attitudes) act as protective factors reducing the risk of emotional, physical and sexual dating violence for heterosexual adolescents and in some cases also for gay and lesbian youths, suggesting this process as a valuable resource to prevent dating violence. It is important to clarify that the more limited evidence found for gay and lesbian adolescents do not mean that the empowerment process offers more beneficial results for heterosexual adolescents; only that we have better evidence in this case for the latter, very possibly due to the larger sample size of heterosexual adolescents.

Several important limitations are present in this research. The first one is the reduced sample of homosexual and lesbian adolescents, that limits the possibilities of the statistical analysis developed. Also, the adolescents included in this study were young High School students, which excludes the most vulnerable ones, those who are not enrolled in school, from this analysis. Additionally, the sample of adolescents analyzed is representative only for three Mexican states, not the whole country.

As well, some relevant explanatory variables for DV among sexual diversity that has been documented in the literature, like experiences of discrimination due to their sexual orientation, minority stress, or internalized homophobia (Ard and Makadon, 2011; Balsam & Szymanski, 2005; Brown, 2008; Martin-Storey & Fromme, 2021) are not available in the data used and should be examined in future research in Mexico on this topic to confirm or compare their role on the risk of DV.

Our findings show the extent of DV among adolescents of sexual diversity and the relevance of making this problem visible, as well as the factors that increase or reduce the risk of this victimization experience, and to that extent raise possible routes of prevention and intervention. Also, it is necessary further research on the path of adolescent's empowerment as a relevant process to prevent DV and to provide young people with key resources to identify and deal with violent relationships, and particularly in the case of youth from the sexual diversity groups.

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