

Prevalence, co-occurrence, and recurrence of teen dating violence across dimensions of sexual orientation: A longitudinal study using a representative sample of adolescents.

WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH ABOUT?

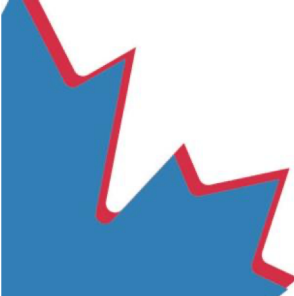
Sexual minority youth are at greater risk of experience dating violence. Stress caused by discrimination and prejudice may contribute to their increased vulnerability. Due to institutionalized discrimination, these youth may also face barriers to accessing resources and care that are sensitive to their experiences. In this study, the researchers examined youth's experiences of multiple forms of teen dating violence, such as psychological and physical violence. They compared the experiences of heterosexual and sexual minority youth, and also explored differences across sexual minority subgroups (e.g., those with different-gender only sexual attraction, those with multigender sexual attraction). To form these comparison groups, this study examined different dimensions of sexual orientation, such as sexual attraction and most recent partner's gender.

WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS DO?

The researchers used data from a large longitudinal study about teen dating relationships that was conducted in Quebec. Wave 1 of the survey asked about youth's experiences in the previous year, and Wave 2 of the survey asked about experiences in the previous six months (altogether capturing participants' experiences in the previous 18 months). The participants were 4,691 students (in Grades 10 to 12) who were involved in a dating relationship sometime during Wave 1 or Wave 2. They answered survey questions about their experiences of dating violence and their sexual orientation. Three dimensions of sexual orientation were captured in the survey: sexual attraction; gender of lifetime sexual partners (different-gender only, same-gender only, multigender, no sexual partner); and most recent romantic partner's gender.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- This study used multiple questions to understand youth's sexual identities. The researchers identified youth with same-gender only, different-gender only, multigender, or no sexual attraction or sexual partners.
- Youth with multigender attraction or multigender sexual partners experienced increased risk of experiencing dating violence, compared to those with exclusively different-gender sexual attraction or sexual partners.
- The findings speak to the importance of having prevention programs and services that are inclusive of all sexual identities and that understand the specific issues faced by sexual minority youth.



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WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS FIND?

Overall, adolescents with multigender sexual attraction or sexual partners and those in same-gender relationships were the most at-risk groups for dating violence. Adolescents with multigender sexual attraction or sexual partners experienced higher rates of physical, sexual, and threatening dating violence, as compared with youth with exclusively different-gender sexual attraction/sexual partners. These youth also experienced higher rates, though to a lesser extent, compared to youth with exclusively same-gender sexual attraction or sexual partners.

Adolescents with multigender sexual attraction were more likely to experience multiple forms of dating violence. Boys, but not girls, in same-gender relationships were at higher risk for sexual dating violence compared to peers in different-gender relationships. Compared to sexually active youth, sexually inactive youth reported significantly lower rates for most forms of dating violence.

HOW CAN YOU USE THIS RESEARCH?

This work demonstrates that there are certain groups of youth with greater vulnerability to experiencing adolescent dating violence, particularly youth with multigender sexual attraction and multigender sexual partners. This finding highlights the need for inclusive dating violence prevention programs, resources, and services that meet the needs of sexual minority youth. Program facilitators and service providers should receive adequate training to understand the specific needs of sexual minority youth. Further research should be conducted to better understand and reduce disparities in the prevalence of adolescent dating violence.

ABOUT THE RESEARCHERS -

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KEYWORDS

Dating violence; adolescence; sexual minority youth

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