

# Dating and Sexual Violence Victimization Among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Questioning Youth: Considering the Importance of Gender and Sexual Orientation

## WHAT IS THE RESEARCH ABOUT?

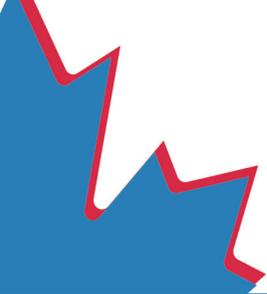
This research is about dating violence and sexual violence among sexual minority youth, defined in this study as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and questioning youth. Past research shows that, compared to their heterosexual peers, sexual minority youth are disproportionately affected by dating violence (which can include physical, sexual, and psychological forms of aggression, within a dating relationship) and sexual violence (which can occur within or outside of a dating relationship). Using a large sample of high school students, this study examined how gender and sexual orientation affect the likelihood of experiencing dating violence and sexual violence.

## **WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW?**

- Sexual minority youth were more likely to experience sexual and dating violence, compared to heterosexual youth.
- Female-identified sexual minority youth reported the highest likelihood of sexual and dating violence, compared to all other subgroups

## WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS DO?

This study used data from a large-scale American study designed to monitor adolescents' health risk behaviours. The sample for the current study included 12,642 high school students from four states. Students answered questions about their sexual orientation, experiences of physical dating violence, and experiences of sexual violence.



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## **WHAT DID THE RESEARCHERS FIND?**

Compared to male-identified heterosexual students, female-identified heterosexual students were almost 2 times as likely to experience dating violence and 2.4 times more likely to experience sexual violence. Compared to heterosexual youth, sexual minority youth were 2.4 times more likely to experience dating violence and 2 times more likely to experience sexual violence.

Comparing different subgroups of youth according to sexual orientation and gender, female-identified sexual minority youth reported the highest rates of dating and sexual violence among all subgroups. Male-identified sexual minority youth reported higher rates of dating violence when compared to female-identified heterosexual youth, and were equally as likely to experience sexual violence.

## **HOW CAN YOU USE THIS RESEARCH?**

This work highlights dating and sexual violence as an important issue affecting sexual minority youth. Decision-makers can use this research to support practices that are inclusive of sexual minority youth. For example, resources can be devoted to identifying and eliminating barriers that contribute to sexual minority youth's risk for experiencing violence and that prevent them from seeking help, such as stigma, a lack of training among potential supports, and policies that do not include sexual minority youth).

## **ABOUT THE RESEARCHER**

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## **KEYWORDS**

teen dating violence; sexual violence; LGBTQ youth; sexual minority youth; adolescence

## **FULL REFERENCE**

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