Understanding and contextualizing teen dating violence

Compreendendo e contextualizando a violência nas relações de intimidade entre adolescentes
Comprensión y contextualización de la violencia en las relaciones de intimidad entre adolescentes

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ABSTRACT

Objective: To describe and analyze teen dating violence with adolescents of a public school in a city in the state of São Paulo. **Method:** Qualitative research, anchored by the Paradigm of Complexity. Data collection was carried out with 16 students of the 11st year of high school, through focus groups and semi-structured interviews. Data analysis was based on the thematic modality. **Results:** There emerged three themes, which made it possible to understand that the myth of romantic love has still present in intimate relationships; as an aspect of these myths, jealousy is revealed as inherent in relationships, while time triggering teen dating violence at the same. Digital social networks have been throughout this process; the family and the school emerge as contexts that expose adolescents to vulnerability, including the experience of other violence manifestations. **Conclusion and implications for practice:** Multidimensional, retroactive and interdependent nature of the aspects related to teen dating violence were identified. Promotion of healthy dating relationships from the deconstruction of romantic love myths; safe use of virtual social networks by adolescents; actions to promote healthy parenting and articulation of health-school-family, with the empowerment of these spaces as factors to protect violence involving adolescents are necessary.

Keywords: Violence; Adolescent; School Health; Interpersonal Relations; Qualitative Research.

RESUMO

Objetivo: Descrever e analisar a violência nas relações de intimidade entre adolescentes de uma escola pública de um município do interior do estado de São Paulo. **Método:** Pesquisa qualitativa, ancorada pelo Paradigma da Complexidade. Coleta de dados realizada junto a 16 estudantes do 2º ano do ensino médio, por meio de grupos focais e entrevistas semiestruturadas. A análise de dados se deu pela modalidade temática. **Resultados:** Emergiram três temas, que possibilitaram compreender que o mito do amor romântico ainda se faz presente nas relações de intimidade; como aspecto desses mitos, o ciúme é desvelado como inerente às relações, sendo ao mesmo tempo disparador de violência nas relações de intimidade. As redes sociais digitais atravessam esse processo; a família e a escola emergem como contextos que vulnerabilizam os adolescentes, inclusive pela vivência de outras manifestações da violência. **Conclusão e implicações para a prática:** Identificou-se o caráter polidimensional, retroativo e interdependente dos aspectos relacionados ao fenômeno estudado. Traz a importância de ações no âmbito escolar e comunitário pelo enfermeiro, na desconstrução de mitos de amor romântico; uso seguro de redes sociais virtuais; promoção da parentalidade saudável e a articulação saúde-escola-família, com empoderamento desses espaços enquanto fatores de proteção a violências envolvendo adolescentes.

Palavras-chave: Violência; Adolescente; Relações interpessoais; Saúde escolar; Pesquisa qualitativa.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Describir y analizar la violencia en las relaciones de intimidad entre adolescentes de una escuela pública de un municipio del interior del estado de São Paulo. **Método:** Investigación cualitativa, anclada por el Paradigma de la Complejidad. Recolección de datos realizada junto a 16 estudiantes del 2º año de la enseñanza media, por medio de grupos focales y entrevistas semiestructuradas. El análisis de datos se dio por la modalidad temática. **Resultados:** Emergieron tres temas, que posibilitaron comprender que el mito del amor romántico aún se hace presente en las relaciones de intimidad; como aspecto de estos mitos, los celos se desvelan como inherentes a las relaciones, siendo al mismo tiempo disparador de la violencia. Las redes sociales digitales atravesan este proceso; la familia y la escuela emergen como contextos que vulnerabilizan a los adolescentes, incluso por la vivencia de otras manifestaciones de la violencia. **Conclusión e implicaciones para la práctica:** Se identificó el carácter polidimensional, retroactivo e interdependiente de los aspectos relacionados a la violencia en las relaciones de intimidad. La promoción de relaciones de intimidad sanas a partir de la deconstrucción de mitos del amor romántico; uso seguro de redes sociales virtuales por los adolescentes; las acciones de promoción de la parentalidad sana y la articulación salud-escuela-familia, con empoderamiento de estos espacios como factores de protección a violencias involucrando adolescentes son necesarios.

Palabras clave: Violencia; Adolescente; Salud Escolar; Relaciones Interpersonales; Investigacion Cualitativa.

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INTRODUCTION

Unhealthy interpersonal relationships usually start early and can last a lifetime. In intimacy relations, due to the specificities they contain, the onset of violence is even more frequent and difficult to address. In the last years, studies have denoted an important relevance to teen dating violence.[1-4]

Several terms have been used in the literature to conceptualize this violence among adolescents, and in this work we will consider the term teen dating violence. It is considered as physical, sexual, psychological or emotional violence in an intimacy relationship, including persecution. It is important to note that this violence may occur personally or virtually, as well as between casual or formal intimate partners.[5]

A survey conducted in the United States in 2011 showed that 23% of women and 14% of men who had experienced sexual violence, physical or intimate partner persecution; had the first experience of some type of violence in intimacy relations between 11 and 17 years of age.[1] Another study found that approximately 10% of college students reported physical violence and 10% reported sexual violence by a dating partner in 2013.[2]

In Brazil, an important study carried out in ten capitals on violence in the affective-sexual relationships of 'hooking up' or dating, between 15-19 year olds, revealed that 86.9% were already victims and 86.8% were already committed some type of violence during the relationship, whether physical, sexual or psychological. It was observed the naturalized and common presence of violence in at least one of its manifestations in the relations of intimacy among adolescents.[3] The present study assumes that the myth of romantic love - understood as an eternal fusion and complementarity between two people in love and associated with the ideal of happiness[3] - can present itself as a trigger for situations of violence. Expressed in other ways, it may be present in contemporary intimacy relations. Violence in intimate relationships brings consequences to the physical and mental health of adolescents in short and long term. Cross-sectional studies have shown that adolescents who are victims of this violence are at increased risk for symptoms related to depression and anxiety; involvement in unhealthy behavior such as tobacco, alcohol, and other psychoactive substances; onset of antisocial behavior and suicidal thoughts.[4-6]

Adolescence is a "key period" of human development that enables the implementation of actions that will promote a healthy adult life.[7-8] It should be understood as a plural adolescence, and public actions and policies should be based on this diversity.[9]

Thus, literature is still incipient in the discussion of teen dating violence, especially in qualitative studies that consider the contexts where they are inserted. Considering these aspects, the guiding question of this study is: what is the meaning attributed to teen dating violence in secondary schools? According to the above, it is presented as the objective of this study to describe and analyze violence in intimacy relations among adolescents of a public high school in a countryside city in the state of São Paulo.

METHOD

This study has a qualitative research, strategic social type and anchored in the Paradigm of Complexity. This considers the look at phenomena in an articulated and polidimensional way; seeks to encompass aspects that are inseparable in the composition of a given phenomenon.[10] Paradigm of Complexity is opportune to base this research, allowing a look at the interactions and contexts with a transdisciplinary approach, seeking to encompass reality.[10] The notions of contextualization and understanding directed the data analysis.[10] Contextualizing is the transdisciplinary look at a given phenomenon, in order to understand it, considering its multidimensionality. Comprehension can be understood as the meaning understanding of an object or event considering its relations with other objects or events.[10]

The study was carried out in a district of a countryside city of the state of São Paulo, with approximately 583,542 inhabitants. The district has an estimated population of 141,998 inhabitants; is located in the West peripheral region, and of high social vulnerability; and shows a high rate of urban, domestic and school violence. The public health network has 18 units, being a Basic District Unit, eight Basic Health Units and nine Family Health Units. It has nine municipal schools and eight state schools, totaling 4051 students. The research was conducted in one of the state schools that offers elementary and middle school in the morning, afternoon and evening.

Participants in the research were high school seniors in the morning, regularly enrolled and attending classes. Students who were removed from school for health leave or other reasons were excluded. The choice for the 2nd year was due to the moment of academic transition that these adolescents lived, corroborating the literature's indications, since they may experience conflicts in this process.[11] In the selected school, there were three classes of the 2nd year, and management chose to start the activity in a class where there were situations of violence in intimacy relations. Of 37 students enrolled in this class, two were on health leave at the time of collection; and three were not attending classes for unknown reasons. At first, the others accepted to participate in the research, but only 16 signed the Free and Informed Assent Term (FIAT), and the Free and Informed Consent Term (FICT) by the parent and/or guardian.

Focus groups and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. As a complement, the field diary was used during the entire collection process to record the input information in the field; approximation of participants; details of collection techniques; and progress of the research. A focus group was held in March 2018, with 16 students, in a room reserved for groups in the school, with good acoustics and luminosity. The group was held in a schedule that did not hinder academic activities; as indicated, was attended by a moderator and two observers. In the present research, phrases of situations experienced in intimate relationships among adolescents were used, which refer to situations of teen dating violence and romantic love

myths, such as "Love supports everything"; "He/she is the half of my orange"; "Woman's place is in the kitchen". Later, these lines were problematized with the following guiding questions: how are intimate relationships among adolescents? What is the purpose of these relations? Which behaviors are positive and which are harmful in these relationships?

As a way to complement the data, seven semi-structured interviews were conducted in April 2018 with adolescents participating in the focus group who were invited to be part of these interviews; these were carried out in the same room as the group occurred. The script started with the following open and guiding questions: what do you mean by intimate relationships? How do you think violence happens in these relationships? Code saturation was chosen to be studied in this study. This is used to identify aspects relevant to the response of a study question and to form a robust description of subjects.[12] As pointed out below, some elements for the understanding and contextualization of teen dating violence, which began to be repeated and deepened in the speeches, guided this saturation: perceptions about established intimacy relations; how the occurrence of violence in these relations unfolds; the relevance of social networks; the impact of violence that occurs in other spaces in the life of adolescents and, in particular, in a context more vulnerable to violence in intimate relationships. Saturation occurred with the focus group speeches and in the seventh interview.

The focus group and the interviews were recorded using a voice recording application for mobile handsets, and manually transcribed. The focus group lasted 1 hour, 12 minutes and 41 seconds; the longest interview had 60 minutes, while the shorter interview lasted 45 minutes. To guarantee the anonymity of participants, the speeches of the focus group were codified by the letters FG, and the letter M for male adolescents and F for female. For the interviews, the letter I was used, maintaining the same codification for gender differentiation; were numbered from the sequences in which they were performed. Field diary's data were used, essentially, to describe the data collection.

The data were analyzed through the Complexity Pradigm and guided by two main notions: contextualization and understanding.[10] The thematic analysis technique directed this analysis through the following steps:[13] familiarization with data: after transcription of the interviews and groups, readings and exhaustive re-readings of the data set were performed; coding: we sought to reference and encode the relevant information according to the research questions through codes that captured the semantic and conceptual reading of the data; codes were grouped with the relevant data extracted from the information set; search for themes: a theme is consistent and significant pattern in the data relevant to the response of the research question; the codes of the previous phase were grouped in these subjects; review of themes: the themes were checked whether they worked according to the extracted data codes and their relation to the general set of data; definition and naming of the themes: the detailed writing of the

analysis of each theme was carried out, identifying the essence of each one; final writing: a comprehensive element of the thematic analysis, which involves the joint reading of the analytic narrative, as well as its contextualization with the relevant literature of the area, legal devices and articulation with theoretical concepts. In order to guarantee greater validity and reliability of the data, the following strategies were carried out: member-checking: return of the data to participants for "checking" the coherence of the content; peer analysis: the construction of reference charts and categories were given by two study researchers, and validated by a third party when necessary; use of the field diary, ensuring greater transparency of the entire research process.

The steps of coding and definition of themes are presented in Chart 1.

The research met the ethical aspects involving human beings, being approved by the Ethics Committee of the *Escola de Enfermagem Ribeirão Preto* of the *Universidade de São Paulo* (Opinion 2,439,567/2017), and authorized by the school research setting. It is reiterated that the information was collected only after the signing of the FICT by the guardians of students and the FIAT by students.

RESULTS

Among the 16 participating students, nine were female and seven males. Of these, seven adolescents participated in the individual interviews, being three females and four males. Adolescents were between 16 and 17 years old; four lived with their father and mother; six lived only with their mother; one lived with his father and his paternal grandmother; one lived with his father; and four lived with grandparents and/or uncles. All families had less than one minimum wage and lived in an area of social vulnerability.

Two adolescents reported not having experienced intimate relationships; one teenager reported having suffered violence in these relationships.

Following the thematic analysis, three themes emerged as follows.

1st theme- "Prince and Princess ": understanding intimacy relationships among adolescents

In this theme, there was evidence of the ideal of romantic love - the existence of a relationship that "transforms" the adolescent into "prince and princess":

> ... when you love a person you like, there is going to be Prince Charming, the princess. He'll be your prince, she'll be your princess.... (FGF).

> ... the feeling turns the person into a princess or prince, not wanting to mix fiction with reality, but it is the best term to put into it (FGM).

Chart 1. Coding and definition of themes. Prepared by the authors. Ribeirão Preto, 2018

Initial codes	Intermediate codes	Final themes
Dating is a serious thing Having a prince or princess Feelings transform Perfect person Having a future Getting married and having kids Passion is faster It can be just sex	Prince and Princess Passion x Love Future	Prince and Princess
Jealousy When violence happens I have problems with Facebook	Jealousy and violence Social media	From jealousy to violence
New family structures Parents separation Mother did not do anything School does nothing Bullying	Parents separation Domestic violence School violence	At home and School did nothing

It is noticed in the speeches that adolescents maintain an idealized feeling, that turns the other always in a better person; use the metaphor "prince" and "princess" to mean romantic love. In this respect, semantics also become important, as it indicates in some way the way teenagers perceive their relationships - in an almost magical way, the transformation of the other into a mixture of reality and fiction.

Still in this aspect, adolescents differentiate, even if shyly and in few words, the different relationships existing from two aspects. The first relates to the intensity of this relationship by differentiating 'passion' and 'love'; passion is associated with shorter relationships, occasional and less stable. Some terms are associated with these experiences, such as *to fuck*:

> *The person goes faster with passion, because passion can be a momentary thing...* (FGF).

> *You met the person, she looked beautiful ... ah, I have to fuck this person ... sometimes in one night* (FGM).

The second aspect, as approached in this last speech, shows the ultimate goal of the relationship, being more important to date because it is associated with the ideal of marriage and love:

> *We started to like each other three years ago, and dating is to get married, in my view dating is to get married...* (FGF).

> *Love is more tranquil ... we talk, we complete each other and also hug, kiss* (FGM).

There is an important gender difference - adolescents bring more colloquial and aggressive vocabularies, such as fuck, while adolescents allude to dating, marriage, and a stable relationship. As reported above, the myth of romantic love is associated with the ideal of eternal marriage, leading some adolescents to live for the other, losing their individualities:

> *... create a life, be able to have someone who can relate and from the moment you relate to someone ... you not only live your life, you have to live her life too, you have to adapt with her* (IF1).

2nd theme - "From jealousy to violence": understanding teen dating violence

As they entered the violent aspects of intimacy relations, adolescents brought, in a resounding way, the issue of jealousy as a trigger for violence in these relationships:

> *Of violence among adolescents, the girl was 14 years old and the boy was 17 years old. With so much jealousy, he even killed her* (IF1).

> *It's a mix of all this, jealousy, violence. The person is dead with jealousy and will not call if it was raining, it*

was snowing, if you got stuck on the Titanic, you had to be there. Fuck it, there's nothing left. You are hers [our writing] (IM3).

In the discussions, jealousy was associated with the feeling of ownership, as evidenced in the speech above and below:

[...] *my boyfriend is very possessive, I cannot talk to my cousins because he does not like it* (FGF).

In a dialogical way, the discussion of the naturalized presence of jealousy in the relationship also emerged as part of any intimacy relationship:

Dating can go through some kind of fight like this, if you talk to someone else you're cheating on me, I get jealous... (IM4).

... feeling jealous of her shorts, talking to someone I do not know... (IM3).

It was also pointed out by adolescents that there is 'natural' jealousy in relation to love, and one that can be 'pathological'. In this way, there is a quantification of this jealousy, however without concrete definition of what would be the borderline of the 'natural' and 'pathological':

... you may be jealous, not much, because that is love (IF2).

... jealousy if you like the person, you feel jealous (IF1).

Jealousy was also related to control. In this sense, it was evident the immersion in the digital age by adolescents and our society. This phenomenon (jealousy-control) is essentially perceived by the use of social networks, especially by the sharing of 'electronic passwords':

... he does not like me talking on the phone [Whatsapp] *... he wants to know my password and I do not like it* (FGF).

One can perceive the experience of intimacy relations in social networks, in a public way; In this sense, violence in these relationships among adolescents also capillizes in this environment, in a non-linear and retroactive way:

I have problems with Facebook, because I think a lot of girls see that the guy is married and shameless, go and send a photo and say: hi baby... (IF2).

I find it weird your boyfriend posting things showing boobs, butt, shameless phrases (FGF).

Adolescents also reinforced some aspects of violence in intimacy relationships that served as warning signs. The issue of feeling disrespected, manipulated, and afraid is relevant:

... violence does not have to be being slapped, violence can be being disrespectful, it can be being manipulated in a way to do what it does not want as a sexual relationship (IF1).

... if you're in the relationship, you're feeling scared that something is not right (FGF).

3rd theme - "At home" and "school did nothing": contextualizing teen dating violence

As mentioned in the characterization of participants, the majority of the families of adolescents are of separated parents who experienced the violence due mainly to the use of psychoactive substances and unemployment; the emergence of new family configurations became evident. It was possible to identify, in the dialogues of adolescents, the experience of situations of violence among their parents, especially of the man against the woman:

I remember the fights that happened and my mother said, "let's go to grandma's [house]*" so as not to see the fights ... he would arrive Saturday, he would drink, go home and beat the gate at dawn, break things and my mother said, "go away"...* (IM2).

Social networks also emerged as relevant aspects for conflicts between parents of adolescents, denoting the central role of digital media in society:

There at home is hard, economic problem, my mother alone with three children ... my mother's quarrel with my normal father, it was because of my mother who started all this ... my father took her cell phone and there it started the fights ... And because she was on her cell phone, he suspected a friend of hers... (IM3).

Another point that is evident in the speeches of these adolescents is the lack of dialogue and care within the family. Some seek and find these affective behaviors with the boyfriend/ girlfriend:

This case [of intimacy relations violence] *had a problem with family ... the mother was a drug user, she did not care, she went into the life of the crime, she became angry, and she used drugs and turned all that...* (IF1).

A little distant from me, my family, my father, does not pay attention to me, my mother is that person who is not even there... (IF1).

My boyfriend who talks to me, I come from school he who sees my notebook, asks how my day was (IF3).

Adolescents bring difficulties experienced in schools after separation of parents and experiences in new family settings, and report some situations of bullying:

I was not like that, I was an extroverted person and I think this has to do with separation from my father ... not wanting to blame only this, then I went to live with my grandmother has the adaptation... (IM2).

I started to face a lot of problems like "ah who you hooked up with", and I suffered bullying and then with these problems I kind of appear, then anger was getting into me, I got nervous, getting closed and deleted... (IM3).

Adolescents still expose the absence of social support for help in handling these situations experienced:

I think like no one helps me to give advice so I get scared and afraid to try to do it like that ... then stay inside me, got it... (IM2).

The experience (or not) of intimacy relations permeates school; in some situations, one also perceives bullying arising from these issues:

There is enough girl that sometimes wants to hook up with me, dating, but I said I do not want to ... I even go through bullying because she says that she is beautiful and everyone wants to date her ... annoys, fills her head with so much they talk about it, like but I usually do not even call but I get sad (IM2).

Although this violence permeates school, it is evidenced in the speeches the still difficulty of intervention of school to face these situations:

Five boys against a girl here at school, and school did nothing (IF1).

DISCUSSION

Considering the Paradigm of Complexity,[10] which seeks to understand the frames of relations that make up a given phenomenon (what is "woven together"), as well as the notions of understanding and contextualization that support this analysis, the following explanatory model was elaborated (Figure 1) for teen dating violence.

Figure 1. Explanatory model of understanding and contextualization of violence in intimacy relationships among adolescents. Prepared by the authors. Ribeirão Preto, 2018
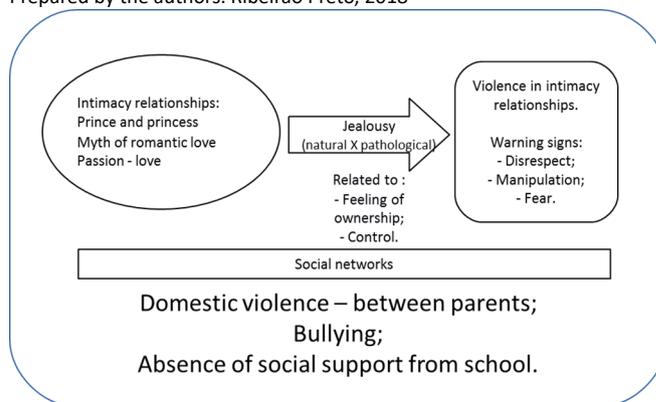
Contemporary intimacy relationships among adolescents remain demarcated by myths of romantic love - if on the one hand, the relationships associated with passion are "fortuitous", commonplace and characterized by hooking up/fucking, the relationships associated with love are characterized by stability, person unique/ideal and eternalized. In this context, jealousy is considered inherent to relationships, except when it can be 'pathological', marked by the feeling of ownership and control. Jealousy can lead to situations of violence, with adolescents highlighting aspects of this phenomenon - fear, manipulation and disrespect. These relationships are crossed by digital media as if there is a "parallel world" where these adolescents also experience their relationships. There is a feedback of the characteristics listed and lived by adolescents in their relations of intimacy to the occurrence of violence in these relationships, and cannot be analyzed separately or in relation to cause and effect. In addition to this aspect, it is perceived that the whole (violence in intimate relations) is in the parts, as well as the parts are expressed in the whole.[10]

As woven interdependent present in this scope, there are immediate contexts of adolescent life, namely school and family. The latter emerges with important factors that make these adolescents vulnerable to establishing unhealthy relationships. Gender violence among parents; the lack of dialogue and care in the family is one of the factors. At school, adolescents experience violence among partners, without a proactive and effective confrontation of this institution. It denotes the retroaction of these elements, principle of complexity that considers non-linearity, in which not only cause acts on the effect, but the effect retroacts on the cause. Thus, these elements are both producers and products of the phenomenon of teen dating violence.[10] It should

be clarified that such elements have been divided into categories for a better description, but the inseparable nature of them is reiterated. Such aspects can subsidize nursing care actions, denoting the expanded and articulated view of the adolescent's vulnerabilities.[9]

The myth of romantic love is referred to and discussed by several authors, being pointed as myth for presenting itself as a set of socially shared and little flexible beliefs.[14] Thus, some aspects are found in the adolescent's speech - the existence of an ideal partner; omnipotence; the wedding; the relationship eternalized, exclusively because there is the ideal person.[14] It links strongly to the ideal of happiness and intense fusion with the other.[3] These aspects are referred to by the study participants, as in the words "living the life of another." Jealousy also emerges as an element of myth, to be better discussed later. In this sense, despite the new forms of relationship, these are still permeated by these myths.

Adolescents presented ways of relating reported in other studies of the area.[3,15] However, in this study, they strongly related 'to fuck/to hook up' to passion, and 'dating' to love. In this sense, they reinforce the myths of idealized love. It is emphasized that, despite the conceptualizations, the experiences surpass these categorizations.

As outlined above, jealousy was the main determinant for the occurrence of violence in intimate relationships among adolescents, being considered natural and belonging to any of intimacy relationships by participants and linked to the ideal of romantic love. Jealousy leads to a negative and complex emotional experience; occurs in a perception of loss or deterioration of a significant relationship by the appearance of a third person, and this threat may be real or imaginary.[15] It is a form of power and domination converted into a control strategy used by the perpetrators. This control takes place through the behaviors of the other and of the relations of the partner,[15] being, therefore more than an implicit violence. Thus, the findings of this study strongly corroborate the literature regarding the relationship between jealousy and possession/control. Another Brazilian study[3] found such findings, especially as a trigger for manifestations of all forms of violence. Therefore, the myths supported by romantic love as factors of high vulnerability to teen dating violence.[15] Control, totally directed to the response-consequence of jealousy by participants of this study, has been pointed out as one of the main manifestations of this violence among adolescents, especially in the digital environment.[16-17]

Intimacy relationships among adolescents were permeated by experiences in virtual social networks, especially on Facebook. As pointed out earlier, it is understood that this environment is understood as natural to adolescents, considered digital natives, and a contemporary "identity contour".[17] This virtual environment crosses both the intimacy relations and the violence that emerge in them.[16] "Sharing of passwords" became the greatest proof of love, with no differences by gender. A qualitative study with university students corroborated these findings, revealing that

despite criticism of the publicity of private life, they recognize that it is a requirement already incorporated into the current culture.[17]

Digital teen dating violence has been explored by international scientific literature in recent years, including behaviors of using digital media to monitor, control, threaten, injure, coerce, or coerce an intimate partner.[18] A study developed in Belgium with students from 16 to 22 years who were in intimate relationships, identified that involvement in risky online behaviors; the longer duration of the relationship; sending messages with sexual content to the partner; and the greater number of social networks used were significantly related to the victimization of violence in digital intimacy mediated by control.[19]

A qualitative study with adolescents aged 12 to 18 years in the UK sought to explore the role of the use of technologies in their intimacy relationships.[20] These technologies can have a positive impact on the development and maintenance of relationships, but can provide a new pathway for unhealthy behaviors. They may also be perceived as less harmful than violence "in person".[20] Another US study with university students indicates that violence in intimate relationships lived in digital media is part of other violence.[21] In this sense, it alerts to the importance of describing these violence in the social contexts where they are experienced, in order to perceive where online experiences function as a "portent" of future violence.[21] In this context, nurses, because of the privileged position they occupy in the teams and services, emerges as an essential and primordial figure for approaching adolescents and their families, and can contribute to the construction of actions for the safe and healthy use of the Internet, especially through intersectoral actions at school.[22]

The perceived disrespect and manipulation/control arising from the situation of violence experienced, as well as the fear felt by the actions of the partner, were the highlighted signals for seeking help and support. Adolescents who experience these feelings can have consequences for physical and mental health.[4,6] As already indicated, the identification of this violence is hampered by personal and social factors. This fact is aggravated in adolescence, when people have greater difficulty in perceiving and talking about these situations of violence.[5] Nursing needs to be sensitive, capable and act in a coordinated way to other services and longitudinal in caring for children and adolescents to host and cope with the situations of violence to which this population is exposed.[23,24]

In this context of seeking help and support, the family and school are the places of greatest coexistence and could have the best strategies to confront and/or prevent teenage violence. Literature review highlighted the risk and protective factors for the perpetration of violence in intimate relationships among adolescents. Among the social protection factors, having a positive relationship with the mother and the sense of belonging to the school were identified.[2] Despite the potency of these contexts, they still do not effectively assume their protective role, as reported by study participants. These data corroborate a

study that analyzed the search for services and support network of adolescents in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil, to confront violence in intimacy relations.[25] Among the study participants, only 5% sought help in situations of violence; friends were the most wanted, followed by relatives.[25]

Experiences of violence in the family, whether witnessing violence among parents or suffering domestic violence, may have an impact on the development of adolescents, especially in the construction of their relationships with peers. Conflicts in relationships among parents can influence beliefs and behaviors about what is acceptable in their own relationships.[26] Violence in childhood, even indirect (witnessing conflicts among parents) and economic vulnerability are presented as risk factors for violence in relations of intimacy.[26] The study, mentioned above, carried out in the city of Porto Alegre, confirms that adolescents want an open dialogue with their parents. However, there are gaps between what is idealized and what happens in reality.[25]

As already mentioned, school did not promote protection in situations of these violence; dialogically, has emerged as a locus for the occurrence of violence, especially bullying. The literature has turned to the discussion of this issue given its magnitude as a health problem in the life of adolescents.[27] The experience of bullying at school should be emphasized, motivated by situations of intimacy relations or family characteristics, and it is perceived that the violence occurs concomitantly in the life of many adolescents. The literature has pointed out that many forms of violence are interconnected and generally share the same roots, and may occur together in families and communities, and at the same time or throughout life cycles.[26] Understanding and implementing approaches that prevent risk factors and promote protection that are common to various types and manifestations of violence can help practitioners use limited resources to prevent violence and save lives more efficiently.[26] Nursing and health should guide their agenda in the recognition of adolescent care as emancipatory, comprehensive, contextual and dialogic practice. Therefore, it is suggested the search for references that respect the non-universality of the adolescent being and the several aspects that vulnerabilize or protect them, in an interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral way.[9]

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The findings of this study revealed the multidimensional, retroactive and interdependent nature of the aspects related to violence in intimacy relations among adolescents. These relationships are permeated by myths of romantic love; jealousy is seen as the main trigger of violence and associated with control. The virtual context crosses relationships and violence; fear, manipulation and disrespect are listed as warning signs of violence in intimate relationships. Violence in the family and school retroaction in the production of this violence.

From these results, implications for the practice of nursing and health are pointed out, namely: the construction of strategies to promote healthy intimacy relationships from the deconstruction of romantic love myths; actions that promote the safe use of virtual social networks by adolescents, such as workshops and dynamics for adolescents and families; actions to promote healthy parenting for families and caregivers of adolescents; health-school-family articulation, with empowerment of these spaces as factors of protection against violence involving adolescents.

The limitations of the study were related to the choice of participants. It is a specific context and a group chosen for having already experienced violence in intimate relationships; differentiation by gender could also have been considered. New studies with younger adolescents, parents and/or caregivers and education professionals, as well as evaluation of the implementation of programs aimed at prevention of violence among adolescents, are recommended.

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