Review

Study of the concept and dimensions of gender-based violence and its connection to adolescence and its link to education

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Abstract: Gender-based violence is a global issue that, in addition to claiming thousands of lives worldwide each year, has serious physical, psychological, and social consequences for the victims. The synergy between gender-based violence and adolescence is a concerning phenomenon, as adolescents are vulnerable to abusive behaviors that they may normalize within romantic relationships. During this stage, ideas about love and relationships are still being formed, which may lead young people to not recognize certain behaviors as gender-based violence. This article provides a literature review on the different types of gender-based violence, focusing on adolescence. Additionally, the main risk factors and the consequences for the victims are analyzed. Finally, preventive lines of work in various areas are proposed, with particular emphasis on coeducation and highlighting the importance of early identification of violence indicators in adolescent relationships, such as control, jealousy, emotional manipulation, and cyberbullying.

Keywords: gender-based violence; adolescence; gender; equality; coeducation

1. Introduction

Gender-based violence is a global issue that claims thousands of lives each year worldwide. According to data from the Ministry of Equality, in 2023, the number of women victims of gender-based violence in Spain reached 194,658, representing a 10.3% increase compared to 2022. Reports of such violence also rose, totaling 199,282, which is a 9.46% increase from the previous year. On average, 533 new victims were recorded daily. The rates of gender-based violence per 10,000 women were notably higher in regions such as the Balearic Islands and Murcia [1]. This phenomenon is a complex social and cultural issue, a structural problem with deep historical and cultural roots that perpetuates gender inequalities within society.

The synergy between gender-based violence and adolescence is a concerning phenomenon, as adolescents are particularly vulnerable to abusive behaviors that may become normalized within romantic relationships. During this developmental stage, notions of love and relationships are often still forming, which can lead young individuals to fail to recognize certain behaviors as gender-based violence. Gender-based violence in adolescence, similar to that experienced by adults, has severe short- and long-term consequences, affecting not only physical health but also mental well-being. Many victims experience anxiety and depressive episodes, substance abuse, disruptive behaviors, and even suicidal ideation. This adversely impacts future relationship dynamics, where issues such as partner violence and the perpetration and/or victimization of sexual violence may arise [2].

In 2010, a survey titled "Equality and Prevention of Gender-Based Violence in Adolescence" was conducted to assess the experiences of adolescent girls regarding partner violence. The results indicated that 3.43% of girls reported having been physically assaulted, 4.64% felt coerced into sexual behaviors they did not wish to engage in, and 6.52% experienced harassment through messages via the internet or mobile devices [3]. Similarly, concerning data emerged regarding male respondents, with 2.51% admitting to having physically assaulted their partner and 4.58% acknowledging having pressured their partner into unwanted sexual activities; additionally, 3.25% reported having harassed their partner through mobile or internet platforms [3]. These data lead us to consider the variables that are perpetuating, even increasing these percentages, despite the public policies and educational actions carried out.

The main objective of this work is to analyze the different typologies of gender-based violence, understand the cycle of violence, and explore how it manifests in teenage relationships. To do so, both theoretical approaches and practical examples will be used to illustrate how these dynamics affect young people in their social and emotional relationships. Additionally, risk factors that may contribute to the development of violent behaviors will be examined, as well as possible prevention and intervention strategies.

2. Conception of gender-based violence

In 1993, the United Nations General Assembly, in its Declaration on the eradication of violence against women, recognized the urgent need to apply the rights and principles related to balance, stability, independence, integrity, and dignity of all individuals, aimed at reinforcing the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women since this constitutes an impediment to achieving equality. It also scrutinized that violence against women is a manifestation of the unequal power dynamics between men and women, which have led to the subjugation and discrimination against women by men. It asserted that violence against women is one of the social mechanisms through which women are forced into situations of submission to men, defining it as "any act of violence based on the female gender that causes or may cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm to women, as well as the threat of such acts, coercion, or unjustified deprivation of independence, regardless of whether it occurs in the public or private sphere" [4].

In this regard, it is essential to distinguish between the concepts of "gender-based violence" and "domestic violence," as these two terms may initially seem similar, but upon closer examination, it becomes evident that they refer to different contexts. In the former case, the perpetrator must have or have had an emotional interaction or bond with the victim, such as being or having been partners, dating, married, or involved in another analogous relationship. Conversely, domestic violence encompasses any degrading action or omission perpetrated by one or more members of a family unit against others; this situation includes violence against all individuals within the family circle [5].

The United Nations defines gender-based violence as "any act of violence based on gender that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or

suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life" [4].

The World Health Organization characterizes gender-based violence, particularly against women, as "a significant and severe global health issue. It includes acts such as physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological abuse, as well as intimate partner violence or sexual violence, which result in harmful consequences for women's health and well-being [6].

Lorente-Acosta, an expert on gender-based violence, defines it as "violence perpetrated against an individual based on their gender, primarily directed toward women, simply for being women, within a context of inequality between men and women." According to this author, this form of violence is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women [7].

Authors such as Boira et al. [8], refer to the concept as "any form of violence directed at a person based on their gender or sex, including physical, sexual, psychological, or economic violence, which occurs in contexts of power inequality between men and women." They emphasize the intersection of social and cultural factors that perpetuate this violence.

Lagarde, a prominent Mexican anthropologist and feminist, defines gender-based violence as "a set of behaviors, actions, and omissions that harm women physically, emotionally, sexually, economically, and symbolically, imposed by the aggressor as an expression of gender superiority and the control they seek to exert over women" [9].

These definitions and references highlight the complexity and multidimensionality of gender-based violence, underscoring its impact on women and the necessity of addressing this phenomenon from multiple fronts, including health, justice, and human rights.

In the following section, we will explore the various forms in which gender-based violence manifests, distinguishing between physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence. It is essential to understand each of these typologies to comprehend the scope of gender-based violence and its effects on victims.

3. Typology of gender-based violence

Gender-based violence encompasses various forms of abuse aimed at controlling and dominating the victim, typically women, within a context of power inequality. The most common types, according to various authors and studies, include [10–12]:

3.1. Physical violence

It is perhaps the most visible and recognized form of gender-based violence. It refers to any act that causes bodily harm or physical suffering to the victim. This type of violence includes, but is not limited to, hitting, pushing, kicking, strangulation, burning, and the use of weapons to inflict harm. Physical violence not only leaves marks on the victim's body but also has profound psychological effects, including fear, anxiety, and loss of self-esteem [13].

It is important to note that physical violence can escalate in severity over time, beginning with seemingly minor acts such as pushing or slapping and progressing to more severe and potentially lethal attacks. Additionally, physical violence is often

employed as a mechanism of control, whereby the aggressor seeks to dominate the victim through fear and intimidation [14]. This physical control frequently intersects with other types of violence, such as psychological or economic abuse, to reinforce the aggressor's power over the victim. As of 2024, 32 women have been murdered in Spain due to gender-based violence.

3.2. Psychological or emotional violence

Psychological violence primarily employs fear as a weapon of coercion. It encompasses insults, threats, humiliation, and isolation that damage the victim's self-esteem and emotional well-being. Sampedro notes that this form of violence is difficult to detect and can have devastating long-term effects [15].

Psychological violence is one of the most insidious forms of gender-based violence, as it is not always visible to others, yet it can be profoundly damaging to the victim. This type of violence involves the use of behaviors and words aimed at humiliating, controlling, manipulating, or emotionally destabilizing the victim through belittlement, threats, social isolation, emotional blackmail, and the manipulation of reality to make the victim doubt their own judgment or sanity (a tactic known as "gaslighting"). Over time, these verbal assaults erode the victim's confidence and self-esteem, leading them to feel trapped and dependent on the aggressor [16].

Psychological violence is particularly dangerous because it can persist over time without being detected, both by the victim and their surroundings, complicating intervention and support efforts. Furthermore, it often serves as a precursor to physical violence, as the aggressor uses emotional abuse to weaken the victim before resorting to physical force.

3.3. Sexual violence

Sexual violence refers to any form of coercion or manipulation aimed at obtaining non-consensual sexual relations. Authors such as Kelly explore the concept of the "continuum of sexual violence," which encompasses a range of behaviors from inappropriate comments to physical rape. In the context of gender-based violence, sexual violence can occur as sexual abuse within a relationship, where the aggressor forces their partner to engage in sexual acts against their will, using physical force, intimidation, or emotional blackmail [10,17].

It is also important to highlight the phenomenon of coercive "sexting," in which the victim is pressured to send intimate images that can later be used for blackmail. This trend is increasingly prevalent among younger individuals through social media [18].

Sexual violence is one of the most severe violations of human rights and represents an extreme manifestation of control and domination over the victim. In many cases, victims do not report these abuses due to fear of retaliation, social stigma, or a lack of confidence in the judicial system.

3.4. Economic violence

Some authors indicates that this type of violence entails absolute control over the victim's financial resources, limiting their ability to be autonomous or escape the abusive relationship. Economic violence is a form of abuse in which the aggressor

controls and manipulates the victim's economic resources to keep them dependent and subordinate. This type of violence includes restricting the victim's access to money, prohibiting them from working or studying, excessively controlling expenditures, accumulating debts in the victim's name, and withholding economic resources as a means of punishment or control [11,19].

Economic violence is particularly insidious because it may be less apparent than other forms of abuse, yet it has a devastating impact on the victim's autonomy and security. This type of violence often coexists with other forms of gender-based violence and contributes to perpetuating the cycle of abuse.

3.5. Symbolic violence

Defined by Bourdieu, symbolic violence is a subtle form of violence exercised through the media, advertising, or social discourse that perpetuates unequal gender roles and naturalizes the subordination of women [19]. Furthermore, as noted by Davila et al. [20], this type of violence underpins all other forms of violence.

3.6. Physical violence

This type of violence refers to the manipulation and harm inflicted through the victim's children or other close individuals, typically with the intent of increasing emotional suffering [21]. Vicarious violence causes irreparable harm and can be devastating for women. Since 2013, when the counting of such murders began, more than 40 girls and boys have been killed by their biological fathers or partners or ex-partners of their mothers, with the goal of permanently destroying the woman.

3.7. Institutional violence

Institutional violence refers to physical, sexual, psychological, or economic violence, among other types of symbolic violence, that is abusively perpetrated by agents and officials of the state in the course of their duties. This includes norms, protocols, institutional practices, neglect, and deprivations that harm individuals or groups of individuals. Institutional violence is characterized by the use of state power to inflict harm and reinforce established mechanisms of domination [22].

4. The cycle of violence

The cycle of gender-based violence is a model proposed by psychologist Walker to explain how violence develops and perpetuates in abusive relationships. This cycle consists of three main phases that repeat and intensify over time. Each phase is crucial for understanding the dynamics of abuse and why victims often remain in violent relationships [23].

1) Phase of tension accumulation: During this phase, the aggressor begins to exhibit signs of irritation, frustration, or anger towards the victim. Small incidents of emotional, psychological, or even physical abuse may occur. The victim, in turn, attempts to calm the aggressor or modify their own behavior to avoid a greater confrontation. Walker notes that victims often try to rationalize the aggressor's behavior, which contributes to the invisibility of the problem during this phase [23].

2) Phase of violent explosion: In this phase, the accumulated tension erupts in a more severe act of violence, which may be physical, psychological, sexual, or a combination of these. It is the moment when the aggressor releases all contained anger, and the victim experiences the abuse more directly and intensely. Walker and other authors, such as Stark, have documented how, in this phase, the victim feels completely powerless and terrified. The incident reinforces the perception that there is no escape [24].

3) Phase of reconciliation or "honeymoon": After the act of violence, the aggressor may show remorse, apologize, and promise that it will not happen again. During this phase, they may be affectionate and loving, leading the victim to believe that the abuse has ended and that the relationship will improve. However, for the most part, the cycle begins anew, and violence resumes. The honeymoon phase strengthens the emotional bond and dependency of the victim on the aggressor. This pattern of intermittent reinforcement makes it more challenging for the victim to leave the relationship.

It is important to understand that this cycle can last weeks, months, or even years, and as it progresses, the phases of reconciliation tend to shorten or disappear, while violence becomes more frequent and intense. Recognizing and understanding this cycle is crucial for intervention and support for victims, as well as for breaking the cycle of abuse.

The cycle of violence is essential for understanding how power dynamics and control are perpetuated in abusive relationships and why many victims find it difficult to escape.

The next section delves into the concept of gender-based violence during adolescence. This stage of life is particularly significant because it is a period of development and identity formation, making it a critical time for the prevention and recognition of violent behaviors.

5. Gender-based violence in adolescence

Adolescence is a transitional period between childhood and adulthood, characterized by significant physical, emotional, and social changes. During this stage, young individuals begin to establish deeper emotional relationships and experiment with their sexual and gender identities. However, it is also a time when they may be particularly vulnerable to the dynamics of power and control that underlie gender violence.

Gender violence in adolescence manifests in romantic and friendship relationships and can take forms similar to those observed in adult relationships, including physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence. Nevertheless, there are specific characteristics of this stage that warrant detailed analysis.

5.1. Social and affective relationships in adolescence: Group belonging

During adolescence, the need for belonging and acceptance within a social group becomes crucial. Adolescents seek to establish their identity and belong to a peer group, which often influences their behavior and how they relate to others. This desire for belonging can have a significant impact on affective relationships, as young

individuals may be willing to tolerate abusive behaviors or adopt violent behaviors to maintain their social status or to avoid exclusion from the group.

For example, in some contexts, peer pressure can lead an adolescent to accept controlling or jealous behaviors from their partner as a test of love or commitment. These dynamics are particularly dangerous because they normalize violence and reinforce harmful gender stereotypes, such as the idea that jealousy is a manifestation of true love [25].

The influence of the group can exert pressure to conform to certain gender roles, which in turn perpetuates inequality and abuse. Adolescents may feel they must act in certain ways to meet the expectations of their peers, which can include the use of violence or the acceptance of violence in their relationships. Therefore, group belonging plays a dual role: it can be a protective factor when the group's values are positive and promote mutual respect, but it can also be a risk factor when violent and sexist behaviors are reinforced [26].

5.2. Learning violence in adolescence

Learning of violence during adolescence is a complex process influenced by multiple factors, including family, school environment, media, and society in general. During this stage, adolescents observe and imitate the behaviors of adults and peers, which can include violent and sexist attitudes.

One of the main channels through which adolescents learn violent behaviors is the family environment. If an adolescent grows up in a household where violence is common, they are likely to internalize these behaviors as normal and replicate them in their own relationships. For instance, an adolescent who witnesses violence between their parents may come to believe that it is acceptable to use force or control to resolve conflicts in their romantic relationships [27].

The school environment also plays a fundamental role in the learning of violence. The dynamics of power and control that develop among adolescents at school, such as bullying, can be precursors to gender violence in future relationships. Young people who are aggressors in the school context may transfer these behaviors to their romantic relationships, while victims of bullying may be more vulnerable to accepting abusive behaviors in their relationships [28].

Media and social networks have a notable influence on the learning of violence. Through exposure to violent, sexist content or narratives that glorify domination and control, adolescents may develop a distorted perception of what a healthy relationship looks like. Social networks, in particular, can, reinforce gender violence by providing platforms where harassment and control can be exercised continuously and on a large scale [29].

Authors like Bandura propose that violent behavior is learned through observation and imitation of models, which applies to gender violence. In social networks, adolescents may be exposed to violent or sexist behaviors, normalizing them or even viewing them as acceptable. Gender violence, as it is modeled and observed in their environment, including media and networks, can be replicated in their own relationships [30]. Similarly, it is posited that networks can act as models of behavior where adolescents learn gender roles and power dynamics, perpetuating sexist or

violent attitudes. Influencers, celebrities, and other users can have a significant impact on the beliefs and behaviors of young people.

Discourses surrounding male power, control over partners, and the sexualization of women can be reinforced through violent or degrading content on social media. In this sense, González delineates that harassment based on gender identity and sexual orientation is common in online environments, especially among adolescents. Social networks provide a setting where cyberbullying can manifest in the form of misogynistic comments, threats of violence, and controlling attitudes, contributing to the learning of gender violence [31].

The role of digital platforms is truly noteworthy. The report "Teen Dating Violence and Abuse, 2010–2014" analyzes the prevalence of violence in adolescent relationships, including exposure to psychological violence and control through social networks. It indicates that one in three adolescents has experienced some form of violence in their relationships, with many of these experiences being mediated or facilitated by digital platforms. Social networks enable forms of surveillance, control, and abuse, such as constantly checking profiles, demanding passwords, or controlling communication with other friends. This type of behavior can become normalized among adolescents if not intervened upon.

Cotterell [32] analyzes how social networks have assumed a central role in the socialization of adolescents, particularly in the construction of their identity and power relationships based on gender, perpetuating gender stereotypes and facilitating symbolic violence. Similarly, the study conducted by Muñiz-Rivas examines how adolescents internalize violent gender roles through various social mechanisms, including new technologies [33]. Through exposure to violent content and reinforcement of stereotypes on social networks, adolescents may come to see gender violence as acceptable or even normal. This idea is reinforced by studies such as Subirats [34], which analyzes the processes of gender socialization and how ideas about romantic love can perpetuate gender violence, especially among adolescents. It argues that social networks and media reinforce these traditional gender roles, leading to the acceptance of violent or unequal relationships.

On the other hand, authors Ortega et al. study cyberbullying and its relation to gender violence online. In their studies, they observe how cyberbullying among adolescents is linked to controlling and dominating behaviors that replicate dynamics of gender violence [35]. The report from the Youth Institute reveals concerning data on the increase of gender violence among adolescents in Spain, highlighting the role of social networks as mediums for harassment, dissemination of non-consensual sexual content, and as tools for exercising control and domination in relationships [36].

We can determine that social learning is key in this process, and the continuous exposure to violent or sexist attitudes and behaviors in networks can normalize gender violence among adolescents.

5.3. Indicators of violence

Identifying indicators of violence in adolescence is fundamental for prevention and early intervention. Often, the signs that a teenage relationship is violent can be

subtle and difficult to detect, both for the young individuals involved and for the adults around them. However, certain behaviors and patterns can serve as warning signs.

López-Cepero et al. [37], developed the "Questionnaire of Violence among Boyfriends," which identifies the following indicators of gender violence:

- Control over the partner: Controlling activities, friendships, clothing, and even the use of social media by the partner is one of the primary indicators. This presents itself as a way to exert dominance or power over the other person.
- Psychological violence: The use of insults, threats, or constant humiliations is another sign of gender violence. Although it often leaves no physical marks, its emotional effects are profound. Authors like Campbell have studied the consequences on physical and mental health due to partner violence, which includes effects on adolescents. Their work is essential for understanding the long-term risks of gender violence [38].
- Excessive and/or retrospective jealousy: The presence of excessive jealousy can lead to unfounded accusations of infidelity or demands for constant explanations regarding the partner's social life.
- Physical violence: Although it is not always present in the early stages, it can escalate from more subtle forms of control and psychological abuse to physical aggression.
- Social isolation: An aggressor may attempt to isolate their teenage partner from friends and family, making the person feel emotionally and socially dependent on him/her.
- Victim-blaming: The aggressor justifies their violent behavior by blaming the victim, indicating that she "provokes" the assaults through her behavior or appearance.
- Decreased self-esteem: Adolescents who experience gender violence often show low self-esteem, feeling increasingly insecure and dependent on their partner.
- Normalization of violence: Many adolescents view control or jealousy as a form of love, which complicates the identification of violence as such [39].

As indicated, gender violence in adolescence is a phenomenon influenced by individual, family, and social factors. The dynamics of power and control, along with the normalization of certain abusive behaviors, lead many adolescents not to identify abuse in their relationships. The studies of the mentioned authors are essential for understanding this phenomenon and designing effective interventions to prevent it.

5.4. The romantic myth

The romantic myth in adolescence and its relationship with gender-based violence is a topic that has been addressed by several authors in recent decades. These beliefs, related to idealized and passionate love, significantly influence the dynamics of youth romantic relationships.

The romantic myth refers to a set of idealized beliefs about love, typically based on the idea that love is the solution to all problems, that it is eternal, unconditional, and must involve sacrifice. During adolescence, these beliefs can create unrealistic expectations about romantic relationships, fostering emotional dependence and control. Some authors have pointed out that these myths contribute to the creation of

a "romantic script" that reinforces gender stereotypes and constitutes a risk factor for gender-based violence. These myths perpetuate unequal roles between men and women, where control and possession are interpreted as signs of love [40].

Regarding the relationship between this concept and gender-based violence, it is important to note that gender-based violence, particularly in youth relationships, is often rooted in beliefs about romantic love. Bengoechea have researched how adolescents internalize these beliefs, reproducing attitudes of control, jealousy, and possession that are justified under the guise of love [41].

In this context, the Association of Men for Gender Equality (AHIGE) emphasizes that the construction of masculinity based on domination and control over women is reinforced by romantic myths, which can lead to violence. Furthermore, psychologist, in her studies on romantic love and gender-based violence, emphasizes that adolescents tend to normalize abusive behaviors if these are framed within a romantic narrative [42].

Several studies have focused on analyzing how romantic myths relate to gender-based violence in adolescence. One such study by Rodríguez-Menéndez and Cuenca-Piqueras [43] analyzes how beliefs about romantic love contribute to the construction of unequal relationships and how these beliefs are linked to controlling behaviors and violence in young couples. Bengoechea explore the relationship between the normalization of violence in youth relationships and the influence of romantic myths on adolescents, highlighting the importance of affective-sexual education in preventing gender-based violence [44]. Herrera [42] provides an analysis of how adolescents reproduce the myths of romantic love and how this contributes to violence within romantic relationships, emphasizing the need to deconstruct these myths through education for equality.

In addition, De Miguel [44] reflects on romantic myths from a feminist perspective, highlighting their role in the reproduction of symbolic and real violence in intimate relationships, especially among youth. Meanwhile, Ferrer et al. [45] present an empirical analysis of the attitudes and beliefs of adolescents regarding violence in intimate relationships and the role that romantic myths play in the perpetuation of these behaviors.

The romantic myth is deeply ingrained in popular culture and adolescent expectations, playing a crucial role in how young people interpret romantic relationships. This set of idealized beliefs about love not only reinforces gender stereotypes but also creates a fertile ground for the emergence of gender-based violence. The cited authors have explored how education for equality and the demystification of romantic love are essential to prevent this violence [46,47]. For instance, adolescents may believe it is normal for their partner to want to control whom they talk to or where they go, interpreting this as a sign of love and concern. Similarly, they may view dramatic conflicts and reconciliations as a natural part of a passionate relationship, failing to recognize that these cycles of violence and reconciliation are, in fact, indicators of an abusive relationship.

The romantic myth is also reinforced through media and popular culture, which often glorify intense and conflict-ridden relationships as the ideal of love. Movies, television shows, and songs that present control, jealousy, and suffering as inevitable

components of love contribute to young people internalizing these behaviors as normal or even desirable.

Demystifying these beliefs is essential for preventing gender-based violence in adolescence. It is necessary to educate young people about what a healthy relationship truly entails—based on mutual respect, trust, and equality—and to help them recognize the signs of an abusive relationship before these harmful behaviors become normalized.

6. Risk factors in adolescence

This section explores the variables that may predispose adolescents to participate in, or be victims of, gender-based violence. These risk factors are numerous and can interact with each other, increasing the likelihood that violence will manifest in adolescent relationships.

The risk factors for gender-based violence in adolescence are multifaceted and encompass psychological, familial, social, and cultural aspects. These factors can predispose adolescents to experience or perpetrate violence in their romantic relationships. Below are the main risk factors detailed [48,49].

6.1. Individual factors

- Low self-esteem: Adolescents with diminished self-esteem are more vulnerable to tolerating abusive situations in their relationships, as they do not feel deserving of respect or equality.
- Emotional dependency: Individuals with a high need for affection or validation from their partner may justify control, jealousy, and possessiveness, increasing the risk of suffering or perpetrating violence.
- Beliefs in romantic myths: As previously mentioned, adolescents who believe in idealized romantic love may view abusive behaviors as "tests of love" and normalize violence.
- History of violence: Being a victim of abuse in childhood or witnessing violence among parents can heighten the risk of reproducing such behaviors in adolescence.
- Impulsivity and low frustration tolerance: Adolescents who struggle to manage their emotions may resort to violence as a means of controlling or expressing anger or jealousy.

6.2. Relational factors

- Unbalanced romantic relationships: When a relationship is based on control, possessiveness, or jealousy, the likelihood of gender-based violence increases. A lack of equality and mutual respect is a strong predictor of abuse.
- Economic or emotional dependency: If one partner is economically or emotionally dependent on the other, they may be more vulnerable to experiencing violence as they may feel unable to end the relationship.
- Excessive jealousy and control: Relationships characterized by controlling behaviors, phone monitoring, social isolation, and activity restriction are strong indicators of the risk of gender-based violence.

6.3. Familial factors

- Exposure to domestic violence: Growing up in an environment where violence is present between parents or in other close relationships reinforces the notion that violence is an acceptable way to resolve conflicts or maintain power in a partnership.
- Lack of communication and family support: Adolescents who do not have close or trusting relationships with their parents or relatives may lack emotional resources or guidance to recognize and prevent abusive behaviors in their relationships.
- Traditional gender role models: Families that reinforce rigid gender stereotypes, such as female submission and male dominance, promote unequal behaviors that can lead to violence.

6.4. Social and cultural factors

- Gender stereotypes and traditional roles: The belief that men should be dominant and women submissive can foster dynamics of power and control that lead to physical, emotional, or psychological abuse.
- Normalization of violence: Adolescents growing up in environments where violence is seen as a natural response to conflicts or as a form of affection may accept such behaviors in their own relationships.
- Peer group influence: The influence of friends is significant during adolescence. If the peer group accepts or promotes controlling or violent behaviors, adolescents are more likely to imitate these actions.
- Media representation: The portrayal of romantic relationships in movies, series, and music that romanticize control, jealousy, or suffering as tests of love can negatively influence adolescents' perceptions of what constitutes a healthy relationship.

6.5. Educational and socioeconomic factors

- Lack of affective-sexual education: The absence of educational programs addressing healthy relationships, gender equality, and emotional management can leave adolescents without the necessary tools to identify and prevent gender-based violence [50,51].
- Socioeconomic inequality: Situations of economic inequality or lack of opportunities can generate stress and frustration, which in some cases lead to power dynamics or control in relationships [52].
- Disadvantaged environments: Living in neighborhoods with high crime rates or poverty may expose adolescents to violent behavior models or environments where violence is a common strategy for problem-solving.

6.6. Technological factors

- Cyberbullying and digital control: The use of social media and messaging applications has created new forms of control and abuse in adolescent relationships. Monitoring a partner's phone, demanding access to social media

accounts, or exercising constant surveillance are forms of violence that are amplified by technology.

6.7. Substance abuse

- Substance use: Excessive consumption of alcohol or drugs can increase the likelihood of violent behaviors, as it affects emotional control, inhibition, and judgment, potentially leading to gender-based violence.

After identifying numerous risk factors, we can consider that prevention requires a comprehensive approach that includes affective-sexual education, questioning traditional gender roles, strengthening adolescents' self-esteem, and promoting relationships based on respect and equality.

7. Prevention and response to gender-based violence in adolescence

The prevention and response to gender-based violence in adolescence have been the subject of analysis in multiple studies, highlighting the importance of early intervention to prevent the consolidation of patterns of abuse and violence. Adolescence is a crucial stage in the formation of identity and interpersonal relationships, making it essential to foster values of respect and equality in early romantic relationships [43]. According to Kotiuga et al. [53], adolescents are in a process of consolidating their self-concept and relationships, so the internalization of traditional gender roles can negatively influence their perception of what constitutes a healthy relationship.

One of the most prominent approaches for preventing gender-based violence at this stage is the implementation of educational programs in schools. According to Álvarez-García [54], Pérez y González educational programs aimed at adolescents should include activities that promote questioning gender stereotypes, fostering equality, and assertive communication in affective relationships [55,56]. These programs have proven effective in reducing the prevalence of sexist attitudes and tolerance towards violence in romantic relationships [45].

As noted by Peterson, another key aspect is the role of families. Family dynamics and the behavior models observed at home are determinants in shaping beliefs about gender roles. Violence within the family can become normalized for adolescents if there is no early and adequate intervention [57].

When gender-based violence is detected in adolescents, action must be swift and multidisciplinary. It is necessary for educational institutions, social services, and health professionals to work together to provide comprehensive support to victims. Intervention should include psychological support to help victims overcome trauma, as well as the implementation of legal measures in cases of severe violence [58].

Furthermore, as Huster and Longo points out, it is also necessary to work with adolescent aggressors to prevent recidivism and promote behavioral change [59]. Reeducation through anger management programs and the teaching of social skills can be effective in modifying violent behavior patterns [60].

Preventing and responding to gender-based violence in adolescence requires a comprehensive strategy involving educational institutions, families, and health and social services. Early intervention is essential to prevent the chronicity of violence in

romantic relationships and ensure that adolescents grow up in an environment of equality and respect.

Preventing gender-based violence in adolescence is a challenge that requires a holistic approach, involving various stakeholders and sectors of society, such as schools, families, social services, the media, and technology. The following details how each of these areas can contribute to preventing this issue and how awareness campaigns play a crucial role in raising consciousness and education.

7.1. School environment

The school environment is one of the main settings where attitudes and behaviors related to gender-based violence in adolescents can be prevented. Educational programs are essential for addressing this issue. It is crucial to integrate content promoting gender equality and peaceful conflict resolution within school curricula. Key measures include initiatives like workshops on healthy relationships, talks with specialists, and the establishment of protocols to address instances of violence [54].

In addition, training teachers and educational staff is vital so they can recognize early signs of violence and respond effectively [43]. This training encompasses identifying controlling behaviors in adolescent relationships and recognizing sexist attitudes that may be precursors to more severe violence.

Schools are pivotal in addressing GBV. Programs such as "Safe Dates" in the U.S. demonstrate how integrating gender equality education within curricula can reduce tolerance toward violence and sexist attitudes among students [61]. Workshops on healthy relationships, teacher training, and clear protocols for addressing violence are effective measures. Moreover, studies like that of Ramírez et al. [62] document the success of Latin American initiatives such as "Género y Juventud," which reduced harmful attitudes and improved conflict resolution among adolescents.

7.2. Family environment

The family plays a fundamental role in the prevention of gender-based violence. Behavioral patterns observed at home significantly influence how adolescents build their relationships. The families should educate towards equality and avoid perpetuating traditional gender stereotypes that encourage roles of domination or submission [57]. To this end, it is essential for parents to be actively involved in their children's emotional education, fostering empathy, respect, and equality in their interpersonal relationships.

Training programs aimed at parents can be valuable for teaching them how to recognize signs of violence in their adolescent children's relationships and how to respond to potential risk situations [45].

Family dynamics significantly influence adolescent relationship patterns. Research shows that exposure to domestic violence increases the likelihood of normalizing abusive behaviors unless addressed through interventions like the "Parent-Child Interaction Therapy" (PCIT), which promotes healthier family relationships [63]. Parent-focused workshops are also valuable, as seen in the Canadian initiative "Respectful Relationships," which educates families about identifying early warning signs of GBV [64].

7.3. Social environment

In the social sphere, community networks, associations, and collectives also play a crucial role in preventing gender-based violence. According to Varela et al. [58], community activities that promote peaceful coexistence and gender equality—such as discussion forums, co-ed sports, and awareness workshops—are essential for eradicating sexist attitudes that may lead to violence.

Coordinated efforts between social services and schools are vital to identify at-risk situations and provide support to adolescents who are victims or at risk of gender-based violence. Additionally, feminist associations and civil society organizations can offer educational resources and guidance for adolescents and their families.

Community networks and organizations play a crucial role in fostering equality and addressing GBV. Varela et al. [58] describe successful examples of community engagement, such as co-ed sports leagues and discussion forums, which help dismantle stereotypes and promote healthier social norms. Collaborative efforts, such as "Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences" (MARACs) in the UK, have shown significant reductions in recidivism among young perpetrators of violence through coordinated responses [65].

7.4. Media

The media has a powerful influence on shaping perceptions of gender-based violence. The way relationships and gender roles are portrayed on television, in movies, and on social media directly impacts how adolescents understand violence within their own relationships.

It is essential that media outlets avoid perpetuating gender stereotypes and instead promote narratives that highlight equality, respect, and the condemnation of gender-based violence. Media should serve as allies in raising societal awareness by spreading campaigns that encourage healthy relationships and openly denounce violence.

Media representations of gender roles deeply influence adolescents' perceptions of relationships. Campaigns like "No es Amor" in Spain challenge toxic narratives by educating youth about possessive and abusive behaviors. Studies underscore the role of media in disseminating positive role models and raising awareness about GBV, which has been effective in reshaping public discourse [66].

7.5. Technology and social media

Technology, especially social media, can serve both as a risk factor and as a tool for preventing gender-based violence. In terms of risk, cyberbullying and control through digital platforms are forms of violence increasingly affecting adolescents [60]. Educational institutions and families need to teach young people how to recognize and report these forms of abuse.

On the other hand, technology can also be an ally in prevention through the dissemination of educational content and awareness campaigns on social media. As Vega et al. [67] point out, there is a need to develop applications and platforms that provide support and guidance resources for young victims of gender-based violence.

While social media can amplify GBV through cyberbullying and digital abuse, it also offers opportunities for prevention. Applications like "Línea de Ayuda

Adolescente" provide discreet support for victims, while campaigns on platforms like Instagram educate about identifying toxic behaviors [67]. These digital tools have been effective in reaching broader audiences and fostering awareness.

7.6. Awareness campaigns

Awareness campaigns are essential tools for preventing gender-based violence among adolescents. These campaigns often aim to bring visibility to the issue, dismantle myths around romantic love, and promote equal relationships based on mutual respect.

One prominent campaign in Spain is "No es Amor" ("It's Not Love"), promoted by the Institute for Women, which seeks to dispel misconceptions about possessive love and educate adolescents on warning signs in relationships. Another key campaign is "Quiéreme Bien" ("Love Me Well"), disseminated on social media, targeting a young audience with messages about respect and equality in relationships.

Preventing gender-based violence in adolescence requires a multi-sectoral approach that includes educational, family, and social settings, with support from media and technology. Awareness campaigns play a crucial role in educating adolescents, encouraging relationships grounded in respect and equality. The collaboration of all social actors is vital for eradicating this form of violence and ensuring a safe and healthy environment for future generations.

Awareness campaigns are powerful tools in preventing GBV. The Spanish campaign "Quiéreme Bien" effectively uses social media to reach adolescents, promoting messages about equality and healthy relationships. Evidence from interventions in Australia and Canada shows that sustained awareness efforts can significantly reduce incidents of GBV among youth populations [68].

8. Consequences of gender-based violence on the victim and penalties for the aggressor

Gender-based violence during adolescence can have profound and lasting consequences for both victims and aggressors. This stage is crucial for emotional and psychological development; therefore, the impact of such violence can affect multiple areas of their lives, with implications that may extend into adulthood. The repercussions may manifest in psychological, social, academic, and physical realms, as well as influence the development of future interpersonal relationships.

8.1. Consequences for adolescent victims

Psychological and relational consequences: Adolescent victims of gender-based violence often experience significant psychological impacts. Common effects include anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Repeated physical and emotional violence can lead the victim to develop a state of learned helplessness, where they feel unable to escape the situation. Additionally, according to Ferrer et al. [45], adolescent girls may experience feelings of shame, guilt, and fear, which inhibit them from reporting the situation or seeking help.

During adolescence, individuals are in the process of constructing their identity and developing emotional relationships. Exposure to an abusive relationship can

distort their perception of what constitutes a healthy relationship, impacting their ability to establish healthy emotional bonds in the future [57]. This can lead to the repetition of abusive relationship patterns in adulthood.

Educational consequences: Gender-based violence can severely impact the victim's academic performance. Emotional trauma and stress interfere with their ability to concentrate and learn. In some cases, victims may resort to social isolation or absenteeism, which also affects their relationships with peers and teachers [43]. Furthermore, there may be social disconnection and an increasing mistrust towards others.

Physical consequences: Adolescent victims of gender-based violence may suffer physical injuries as a result of abuse, ranging from bruises to more serious damage [58]. In cases of sexual abuse, victims may also experience reproductive health issues, sexually transmitted infections, and unintended pregnancies.

Mental health consequences: Adolescent girls who suffer from gender-based violence are at higher risk of developing long-term mental health disorders, such as chronic depression, anxiety disorders, and tendencies toward self-harming or suicidal behaviors [53]. Exposure to violence at such a sensitive stage can have a persistent impact on emotional well-being.

8.2. Consequences for the adolescent aggressor psychological consequences

Adolescent perpetrators of gender-based violence are often witnesses to or victims of violence within their family or social environments [54]. Without proper intervention, there is a high risk that these patterns of violent behavior will continue in their adult relationships. Violence becomes an acceptable way to resolve conflicts or assert control over a partner.

Aggressors often lack emotional skills such as empathy and self-control, exacerbating their violent behavior [60]. These individuals tend to experience difficulties forming healthy and respectful relationships during adolescence and adulthood. Moreover, their aggressive behavior can lead to social isolation or rejection, reinforcing hostility towards others.

Educational consequences: The violent behavior of aggressors can result in academic problems, including school expulsion or declining academic performance. As noted by Rodríguez-Menéndez and Cuenca, aggressors often display a lack of respect for rules and authority, leading to disciplinary or even legal consequences. In severe cases, they may face charges and judicial consequences, marking their legal record from an early age [43].

Mental health consequences: Aggressors may also experience mental health issues, though in a manner distinct from victims. Impulsivity, uncontrolled anger, and an inability to manage emotions effectively can lead to disorders such as depression, anxiety, and anger management issues [45]. In some cases, aggressors may have been victims of violence themselves, adding an additional layer of emotional complexity to their behavior.

Without appropriate treatment, adolescent aggressors are likely to replicate violent behaviors in future relationships. According to Varela et al. [58] the lack of

reeducation in emotional and social skills can lead to repeated patterns of domination and abuse in their adult relationships, perpetuating an intergenerational cycle of violence.

8.3. Intervention and prevention

It is crucial to intervene with both victims and aggressors to break the cycle of adolescent gender-based violence. Early and appropriate intervention in both cases can help mitigate long-term consequences. Reeducation programs for aggressors, psychological support for victims, and social awareness of the issue are essential measures [69].

Victims need psychological support to overcome trauma and rebuild their self-esteem, while aggressors require intervention to learn self-control, empathy, and peaceful conflict resolution skills. Emotional and gender equality education from an early age is also key to preventing gender-based violence before it manifests.

Adolescent gender-based violence has devastating consequences for both victims and aggressors. In both cases, the effects can extend throughout life, affecting mental health, personal relationships, and emotional development. Early intervention and gender equality education are key tools to break the cycle of violence and ensure a healthier and more equitable future for both [53,56,70].

8.4. Penalties for adolescent perpetrators

Penalties for adolescent perpetrators of gender-based violence in Spain are regulated by Organic Law 5/2000 on the Criminal Responsibility of Minors, which sets the framework for judicial intervention with minors aged 14 to 17. Adolescents can be prosecuted for gender-based violence crimes, but the sanctions differ from those imposed on adults, as the system is more focused on rehabilitation than punishment.

The main sanctions that can be imposed on a minor offender are as follows:

8.4.1. Detention in a juvenile center

Different types of detention exist: Closed detention; the minor is deprived of liberty and placed in a specialized center under strict conditions, which include educational and training activities. The duration varies according to the severity of the offense but can last up to 6 years; Semi-open detention; this combines confinement within the center with the possibility of supervised external activities; Therapeutic detention; applied in cases where the minor exhibits psychological, behavioral, or addiction issues and requires specialized treatment in a controlled setting.

8.4.2. Supervised freedom

This measure can last up to 5 years and entails continuous supervision of the minor's behavior. During this period, the offender is subject to certain restrictions, such as the prohibition of approaching the victim, and is required to follow educational or re-education programs on gender equality and peaceful conflict resolution.

8.4.3. Community service

The court may require the minor to perform unpaid community service. These tasks are designed to educate the offender on values of respect and equality. The

maximum duration of this measure is 200 h.

8.4.4. Prohibition of contact and communication

The offender may be sentenced to a prohibition on approaching or communicating with the victim by any means (phone, social media, etc.), including restrictions on approaching their residence or school. This measure is typically applied to protect the victim and can last for several years.

8.4.5. Educational or reintegration programs

The judge may order the minor to participate in educational or therapeutic programs aimed at re-educating and raising awareness about gender-based violence. The objective is to change the minor's sexist and violent attitudes, teaching them to manage emotions and behaviors in a non-violent manner.

8.4.6. Fines or compensation

If deemed appropriate by the judge, the minor may be required to pay a fine or provide compensation for damages caused to the victim, although this depends on the minor's and their family's financial capacity.

8.4.7. Judicial warning or admonition

In less severe cases, the judge may opt for a formal warning, informing the minor of the consequences of their behavior and urging them to change their attitude.

8.4.8. Complementary measures

In addition to the sanctions mentioned, courts may impose other measures such as participation in psychological therapy, anger management courses, or gender equality programs to prevent recidivism.

Various factors may influence the imposition of penalties on the offender, such as the gravity of the offense, the degree of violence, the harm caused to the victim, and the offender's personal circumstances, including family, psychological, and social background, or issues with addiction. For repeat offenders, penalties tend to be more severe.

The focus of juvenile law in Spain is primarily on the rehabilitation and reintegration of the juvenile offender, aiming to prevent such behavior from continuing into adulthood. However, given the notable increase in gender-based violence cases among adolescents, with increasingly violent incidents, many in society and among professionals advocate for a restructuring of this law to favor the victim and provide a more deterrent measure for offenders.

8.5. Resources for victims

In Spain, there are various resources available to provide protection and assistance to adolescent victims of gender-based violence, designed to offer emotional, legal, and psychological support while ensuring their safety. The main resources are outlined below:

8.5.1. Help and emergency hotlines

● Gender-based violence victim assistance hotline.

This free, confidential service operates 24/7, year-round, providing information on rights, support services, and protection measures for gender-based violence victims.

It leaves no trace on phone bills or call records, ensuring discretion. Assistance is available in 52 languages, with a special service for people with hearing or speech disabilities.

- ANAR Hotline: 900 20 20 10. This hotline is specifically aimed at adolescents and children who are victims of violence or at risk. It offers free, anonymous psychological, social, and legal assistance, available 24 hours a day, managed by the ANAR Foundation (Aid for Children and Adolescents at Risk).

8.5.2. Protection and security services

- Restraining orders and judicial protection. Victims of gender-based violence can request a restraining order prohibiting the offender from approaching or contacting them. This measure is managed by the courts and the police. An integrated protection order may also be granted, which includes security, judicial, and social protection measures.
- Electronic monitoring bracelets. To ensure the victim's safety, offenders are sometimes required to wear electronic bracelets that alert the police if they approach the victim, thereby violating the restraining order.
- VioGén system. This comprehensive tracking system for gender-based violence cases coordinates actions among law enforcement, social services, and judicial authorities. The VioGén system assesses the risk to the victim and adjusts protection measures based on the aggressor's threat level.

8.5.3. Psychological and social support

- Integrated women's support centers. Managed by regional and local governments, these centers offer specialized psychological, legal, and social support for women and adolescent victims of gender-based violence. They provide both individual and group support services, aiding victims and their families.
- Specialized psychological support programs. Many autonomous communities offer free psychological intervention programs specifically for adolescent victims of gender-based violence, managed by mental health and social welfare services.
- Individual therapy. Provides emotional support to help adolescents overcome trauma and restore self-esteem.
- Group therapy. Offers victims the opportunity to share experiences with others in similar situations, helping them feel less alone.

8.5.4. Shelters and supervised housing

For victims who need to leave home for safety reasons, shelters and supervised housing provide temporary accommodation, protection, and emotional support. These resources are managed by the social services of regional governments, allowing adolescent victims of gender-based violence and their children, if they have any, to live in a secure environment while receiving professional assistance.

8.5.5. Free legal assistance

Adolescent victims of gender-based violence have the right to free legal assistance, regardless of their economic situation. Specialized gender-based violence attorneys guide them through the judicial process, from filing complaints to seeking protection measures or claiming compensation.

8.5.6. Family meeting points

These centers are available to ensure that adolescent victims of gender-based violence can maintain contact with their families in a safe and controlled environment, if necessary. Family meeting points are neutral spaces where victims can meet with family members under professional supervision when there is a risk in family interactions.

8.5.7. Education and awareness programs

- Preventive educational programs. Educational institutions and non-governmental organizations conduct gender-based violence prevention programs aimed at adolescents. These programs address gender equality, peaceful conflict resolution, and the identification of abusive behaviors. Workshops like "Educating for Equality" or "This Isn't Love" aim to raise adolescents' awareness of gender-based violence indicators and promote healthy relationships [53,56,71].
- Educational materials and social media campaigns. Platforms and websites like the Women's Institute or the National Youth Institute (INJUVE) provide educational resources on adolescent gender-based violence. Social media campaigns also raise awareness among adolescents on this topic, promoting respect and equality in romantic relationships.

8.5.8. Organizations and NGOs providing support

- ANAR foundation. In addition to its hotline, the foundation offers protection and emotional support programs for minors at risk and gender-based violence victims. It provides assistance with filing complaints and psychological support.
- Women's foundation. This foundation works on gender-based violence prevention and awareness, offering support programs for adolescent victims and their families, as well as educational resources.
- Save the children. Save the Children provides assistance to at-risk minors, including victims of gender-based violence, through educational and social programs, as well as direct psychological and legal support actions.

8.5.9. Emergency mobile applications

- AlertCops. A Ministry of the Interior application that allows gender-based violence victims to discreetly alert security forces in emergencies by sending their real-time location and a distress message.
- Libres. This app, promoted by the Ministry of Equality, offers resources, guidance, and advice for women, including adolescents, suffering from gender-based violence. It also provides access to help hotlines and advice on seeking protection measures.

9. Conclusion

Gender-based violence during adolescence is a deeply entrenched societal issue, with devastating consequences for both victims and perpetrators. This study has enabled an exploration of the various factors contributing to its emergence, the multiple forms of violence that manifest during this period, and the severe repercussions on physical, psychological, emotional, and social levels.

One of the key conclusions is that adolescence represents a period of critical vulnerability, where young people are in the process of forming their identities and experiencing their first intimate relationships. During this stage, gender stereotypes, the myth of romantic love, and observed behavioral models within family, school, and media play a fundamental role in normalizing violent behaviors. Consequently, affective-sexual education and the promotion of relationships based on respect and equality emerge as essential factors for preventing gender-based violence from early ages. This study contributes to existing knowledge by emphasizing the intersection of cultural, emotional, and educational influences during adolescence, providing a nuanced understanding of how gender-based violence originates and perpetuates within this vulnerable period.

Furthermore, this study underscores the importance of early identification of signs of violence within adolescent relationships. Control, jealousy, emotional manipulation, and cyberbullying are less visible but equally destructive forms of violence that can escalate into more severe aggression if left unaddressed. In this regard, strengthening support networks at both familial and institutional levels is critical for providing adolescents with the tools needed to recognize and reject abusive behaviors.

The study also highlights the need for a multidisciplinary intervention involving family, schools, social services, and the judicial system. Re-educating adolescent offenders is crucial to prevent the perpetuation of violence in future adult relationships, while emotional and psychological support for victims is indispensable for their recovery and the rebuilding of self-esteem.

Future work stemming from this study could involve the development and testing of specific intervention programs tailored to adolescent experiences, integrating insights from this research to refine preventive strategies and education models. Additionally, longitudinal studies could track the long-term impacts of early interventions, deepening our understanding of how early prevention shapes relational dynamics into adulthood.

Finally, it is imperative to continue working on awareness campaigns and to consider legislative revisions that protect adolescents from gender-based violence. These measures should ensure victims' safety, provide accessible and effective resources, and apply sanctions that, beyond penalization, seek the reintegration of offenders.

Gender-based violence in adolescence is an alarming reality that demands a comprehensive response. By identifying specific gaps in current interventions and exploring new avenues for action, this study not only sheds light on the complexities of this issue but also lays the groundwork for practical, evidence-based solutions. Only through education, social awareness, and a preventive and restorative approach from early ages will it be possible to eradicate this phenomenon and foster healthy, respectful relationships grounded in equality.

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