

Health impacts of gay teens victims of bullying

Impactos à saúde de adolescentes homossexuais vítimas de bullying

Impactos en la salud de adolescentes homosexuales víctimas de acoso

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RESUMO

Objetivo: Analisar a produção científica sobre os impactos à saúde de adolescentes homossexuais vítimas de bullying. **Método:** A metodologia utilizada para elaboração deste trabalho foi a revisão bibliográfica. Essa compreende levantamento de toda bibliografia já publicada em forma de livros, revistas, jornais, monografias, teses, publicações avulsas e material cartográfico. Sua finalidade é colocar o pesquisador em contato direto com tudo aquilo que foi escrito sobre determinado assunto. **Resultados:** Foram encontradas 13 publicações, sendo 03 eliminadas pela leitura inicial dos títulos. Na leitura dos resumos dos 10 artigos restantes segundo os critérios de inclusão/exclusão, foram eliminados 05 artigos: 1 estudo por não ser aplicada a visita pré-operatória de enfermagem, 1 estudo realizado por profissionais de saúde que não enfermeiros, 1 estudo por não ter relação direta com o tema e 2 estudos estavam fora do recorte temporal. Os 05 artigos restantes foram lidos integralmente e mantidos na amostra final dessa revisão. **Conclusão:** o bullying sofrido por adolescentes homossexuais têm grande relevância e complexidade, podendo atingir negativamente à pessoa direcionada a esses ataques.

Descritores: Saúde mental; Bullying em Âmbito Escolar; Adolescência.

ABSTRACT

Objective: To analyze the scientific production on the health impacts of homosexual adolescents who are victims of bullying. **Method:** The methodology used to elaborate this work was the literature review. This comprises a survey of all bibliography already published in the form of books, magazines, newspapers, monographs, theses, single publications and cartographic material. Its purpose is to put the researcher in direct contact with everything that has been written on a given subject. **Results:** Thirty publications were found, 03 of which were eliminated by the initial reading of the titles. In the reading of the abstracts of the remaining 10 articles according to the inclusion/exclusion criteria, 05 articles were eliminated: 1 study because the preoperative nursing visit was not applied, 1 study conducted by health professionals other than nurses, 1 study because it had no direct relationship with the theme and 2 studies were outside the time frame. The remaining 05 articles were read in full and kept in the final sample of this review. **Conclusion:** the bullying suffered by homosexual adolescents has great relevance and complexity, and can negatively affect the person directed to these attacks.

Descriptors: Mental health; Bullying in School; Adolescence.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Analizar la producción científica sobre los impactos en la salud de adolescentes homosexuales víctimas de bullying. **Método:** La metodología utilizada para elaborar este trabajo fue la revisión de la literatura. Esto comprende un estudio de toda la bibliografía ya publicada en forma de libros, revistas, periódicos, monografías, tesis, publicaciones individuales y material cartográfico. Su propósito es poner al investigador en contacto directo con todo lo que se ha escrito sobre un tema determinado. **Resultados:** Se encontraron treinta publicaciones, 03 de las cuales fueron eliminadas por la lectura inicial de los títulos. En la lectura de los resúmenes de los 10 artículos restantes según los criterios de inclusión/exclusión, se eliminaron 05 artículos: 1 estudio porque no se aplicó la visita de enfermería preoperatoria, 1 estudio realizado por profesionales de la salud distintos al enfermero, 1 estudio por no tener relación directa con el tema y 2 estudios fuera del marco temporal. Los 05 artículos restantes se leyeron en su totalidad y se mantuvieron en la muestra final de esta revisión. **Conclusión:** el bullying sufrido por adolescentes homosexuales tiene gran relevancia y complejidad, pudiendo afectar negativamente a la persona dirigida a estos ataques.

Descriptores: Salud mental; Bullying en la escuela; Adolescencia.

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Introduction

Homosexuality in adolescence can generate certain complexities for adolescents, as the idea in the social environment advocates that the orientation of sexuality should be heterosexual, marginalizing other manifestations of human sexuality. Marginalization can be problematic in adolescence because it is a phase in which the individual undergoes physical and behavioral changes, changes that are fundamental for the adolescent to reach maturity and be inserted into society as an adult.¹

According to the Ministry of Health, in 2012, 4,851 cases of homophobia were registered, with the majority (61.16%) of the victims aged between 15 and 29 years old, data that demonstrate the relevance of the problem of homophobia and its marginalization, which point to also, adolescents as members of a vulnerable group. Homophobia corresponds to any form of discrimination based on a non-heterosexual sexual orientation¹, thus involving beliefs, attitudes, stereotypes and negative behaviors (e.g. irritating, threatening, pestering) towards homosexual individuals.² Homophobic bullying can be characterized by behaviors associated with general bullying, but have a homophobic content. According to some authors, homophobic bullying can become more serious compared to bullying in general, as it is less visible and less credible than other forms of bullying, including by teachers themselves in schools.³

Thus, the importance of this study lies in deepening the issues of the impact on the health of homosexual adolescent victims of bullying, in this way, the objective was to analyze scientific productions on such impacts.

Thus, this study aimed to analyze the scientific production on the health impacts of homosexual adolescents who are victims of bullying.

Method

The methodology used for the elaboration of this work was the bibliographic review. This comprises a survey of all bibliography already published in the form of books, magazines, newspapers, monographs, theses, separate publications and cartographic material. Its purpose is to put the researcher in direct contact with everything that has been written on a given subject.

Data were collected from 2015 to 2022 in the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), Google Scholar and in Nursing Databases (BDENF). For the search, the following Keywords were used: Mental Health, School Bullying and Adolescence.

Articles published in Portuguese (Brazil), available online and in full were included. Those published in English and without relevance to the topic were excluded.

Initially, an exploratory reading of the titles and abstracts was carried out to recognize the articles that met the eligibility criteria. Then, the articles previously selected were read in full, which were again submitted to the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

After selecting the final sample, the following variables were extracted from the publications and added to the synoptic table of this review: year of publication, webqualis of the journal, publication journal, language, objective, methods, results and conclusions.

Results e Discussion

13 publications were found, 03 of which were eliminated by the initial reading of the titles. In reading the abstracts of the 10 remaining articles according to the inclusion/exclusion criteria, 05 articles were eliminated: 1 study for not applying the preoperative nursing visit, 1 study carried out by health professionals other than nurses, 1 study for not having a direct relationship with the theme and 2 studies were outside the time frame. The remaining 05 articles were read in full and kept in the final sample of this review.

Adolescence and Sexuality

To understand sexual orientation and gender identity, we need to understand the concept of sexuality. In general, sexuality is related to both genitality and sexual intercourse.⁴

Bearing Freud's perspective in mind, sexuality is defined as "an instinctive vital energy directed toward pleasure and associated with the developmental stages of homeostasis, affect, social relationships, early childhood libido and eroticism, intercourse, reproduction, and sublimation."⁴

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), sexuality is an energetic act that encourages us to seek love, intimacy, affection and contact, manifesting in our emotions, movements and not the way we "touch and are touched", there is a harmony between sensuality and sexuality. Sexuality interferes with the way we feel, think and act, and affects people's mental and physical health.

It is influenced by the interrelationships between "biological, psychological, social, economic, political, cultural, ethical, legal, historical, religious and spiritual factors". In addition to biological or physiological factors, it also includes social, emotional and relational aspects. However, each society and culture regulates behavior of a sexual nature in accordance with morals, customs and civil laws.⁵

Adolescence refers to the encounter between social, historical and cultural contexts and the transformation of the subject, making him singular and collective in search of identity, including gender identity and his place in the world. Sexuality becomes visible as a component of the development and adolescence process.⁵⁻⁶

During adolescence, physical, hormonal and logical (deductive) maturation occurs. On a socio-emotional level, during the early adolescent years, humans undergo major puberty-related (hormonal) changes that increase sensory seeking, reward seeking, and emotional activation.⁶

Between the affective and cognitive systems, there are different rhythms of biological maturation: there is greater social sensitivity and activation of the affective system, but, conversely, immaturity at the cognitive level – the distinction between right and wrong. Adolescence favors errors at the cognitive level that can be reflected in risky behaviors. It is also a time of excessive demand for sensations and novelties.⁷

Sexual Diversity

According to WHO (2003), the overall impact of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is immense. With homosexuality, sexual behavior and homosexual identity gained visibility.⁸

Originally, the term queer was associated with the concept of insult, but it was also idealized as weird, strange. Perceptions had to change. This process challenges the notion of queer as a label and critiques the terminology and ideology linked to identity.⁸

On the axis of sexuality, people are grouped according to their sexual identity, lesbian, gay, bisexual, etc. With regard to their integration, “the continuity between these groups is confirmed or a universal mental bisexuality is explored”.⁹

In summary, the fact that they contradict fixed identity ideologies, make knowledge possible and emphasize a variety of non-normative identities, makes these theories a critique that emphasizes criteria other than non-normative ones, making the production of a critical psychology prescribed by society appropriate. Queer feminist theories can accommodate new intervention spaces beyond the existing ones related to the LGBTQIA+ community.⁸

Homophobic Bullying in a School Context

The quality of interpersonal relationships experienced at school is an important aspect of the healthy development of children and adolescents. School institutions enable the acquisition of relational knowledge and the exercise of social skills rarely achieved in other contexts that would not allow a more direct interaction with peers. However, in the course of interaction between students, situations characterized by conflict and violence may arise at certain times. Participation in or exposure to school violence can provoke emotional reactions that lead students to engage in fight-or-flight behaviors that negatively affect their health and socialization and learning processes.¹⁰

Despite the harmful effects of bullying, most victims do not report the aggression experienced to family members or teachers, either because they fear the aggressor's reaction, for fear of being discredited by adults or because they develop the thought that the situation is normal. Thus, attacks can last for years without the family or school authorities knowing.¹¹⁻¹²

Bullying, described as a subcategory of violence and identified as intentional and repetitive aggressive behavior rooted in relationships with power imbalances, has become a serious public health problem that affects children and adolescents of school age.¹⁰

This type of violence spreads through different forms of interaction, such as aggressors, victims and witnesses, in which students play specific roles. Attacks in practice are divided into three categories: physical (punches and kicks), verbal (derogatory nicknames, name calling, gossip, insults) and psychological (colleague isolation/social exclusion).¹¹⁻¹²

Homophobia in this context manifests itself as an ambiguous concept and multiple phenomenon regarding negative emotions and behavior of individuals or groups associated with homosexuality. With regard to psychiatric symptoms and negative feelings that cause dread, discomfort, hostility, rejection, as well as prejudice related to discrimination and violence against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders, homophobia is also associated with power and sexuality existing in the society.¹¹⁻¹²

Confronting violence as a social process is of interest to the health sector. In this discussion, the field approach is not limited to questioning the support models for victims of different types of violence, but aims to prevent this phenomenon and make it an object of discussion and consideration, helping to develop strategies for inclusion in everyday life and how to intervene in its complexity.¹¹⁻¹²

From another perspective, the Child and Adolescent Statute (CAS) certifies that no child or adolescent should be discriminated against or subjected to violence inside and outside the family. A different reality of specific groups of young Brazilian teenagers, mostly homosexuals, who are subject to human rights violations and types of violence. In a global analysis, it suggests that the right to freedom and security seems to be denied to the LGBTQIA+ population, in general and to adolescents.¹⁰⁻¹²

The consequences of being involved in bullying situations can accompany students in their lives and determine how they attribute meaning and/or respond to social relationships. In addition, chronic health problems related to bullying may take time to manifest themselves, but social problems such as loneliness, social exclusion, poor school performance, repeated absences from classes, among others, occur quickly and negatively affect the quality of life of the students and schooling.¹⁰⁻¹²

Depression and Related Factors in Homosexual Adolescents

Bullying has become a serious public health problem in recent years, affecting school-age children and adolescents.¹⁰⁻¹¹

Homosexual adolescents seem to be more at risk of developing some type of mental disorder and suicide attempts than heterosexual adolescents. Several studies conducted so far have provided reliable evidence on the mental health of sexual minorities.¹³⁻¹⁴

Despite the limited information available on the reasons for the high prevalence of mental illness and suicide among sexual minorities, some relevant associations have emerged. As already mentioned, homosexuals suffer from institutionalized prejudice in society and from multiple forms of violence and exclusion. As a result, a feeling of shame about their sexual orientation is internalized, exacerbated by feelings of helplessness due to lack of family and social support.¹³⁻¹⁴

The scientific literature shows that bullying in school environments can lead to a series of problems related to physical and mental health, more likely to present anxiety, negative thoughts, low self-esteem, depression, self-mutilation, psychosomatic disorders (headaches, dizziness, problems stomach upsets, etc.) and suicidal tendencies. Aggressors, in turn, tend to be involved in situations of domestic violence, substance abuse, vandalism and petty crime.¹³⁻¹⁴

Conclusion

Due to the mentioned facts and results found in this research, we conclude that the bullying suffered by homosexual adolescents has great relevance and complexity, and can negatively affect the person targeted by these attacks. Social exclusion, stigmatization, verbal/physical aggression are commonly seen homophobic behaviors, and these oppressive acts cause serious harm. When suffering homophobic bullying, the adolescent generally starts to have a lower school and interpersonal income/performance. The physical and mental health of the individual tend to suffer greater vulnerability, therefore, psychosomatic disorders and mental disorders can be triggered, disorders that increase the chances of self-extermination.

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