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FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

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Lara Escarlete Miranda de Souza[1], Eduarda Vitória Lima de Oliveira[2], Karla Michelle Salvino Gadelha[3], Joelson dos Santos Almeida[4], Tallys Newton Fernandes de Matos[5] and Maria do Rosário Costa Miranda[6]

ABSTRACT

Objective: To investigate the factors associated with the perpetuation of violence against children and adolescents in the school environment. Methodology: The guiding question involved "What are the factors that are associated with the perpetuation of violence against children and adolescents in the school environment?". The literature search was carried out in the "Medline", "Web of Science", "Lilacs" and "Scopus" databases. Data collection took place through complete reading, evaluation of titles, abstracts and elimination of duplicate articles. The critical analysis of the selected studies was based on the levels of evidence. The discussion of the results took place through data triangulation. The presentation of the review took place through the descriptive model, through the principles of scientific communication. Results and Discussion: 15 articles were selected that enabled the

[1] Nursing Student
State University of Piauí (UESPI)
Lattes: http://lattes.cnpq.br/1041749621026214
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0009-0005-9867-6504
E-mail: laraescarletemdesouza@aluno.uespi.br
[2] Nursing Student
State University of Piauí (UESPI)
Lattes: http://lattes.cnpq.br/3057109972567869
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-9972-5034
E-mail: eduardalima126@gmail.com
[3] Nursing Student
State University of Piauí (UESPI)
Lattes: http://lattes.cnpq.br/6415612305826201
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0009-0001-4510-8512
E-mail: karlagadelha@aluno.uespi.br
[4] Doctorate student in Public Health
State University of Ceará (UECE)
Lattes: http://lattes.cnpq.br/1062085652554108
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6926-7043
E-mail: joelsonalmeida2011@gmail.com
[5] Doctorate student in Public Health
State University of Ceará (UECE)
Lattes: http://lattes.cnpq.br/3413329240036879
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6774-1733
E-mail: tallysnfm@gmail.com
[6] Dr. in Pedagogical Sciences
State University of Piauí (UESPI)
Lattes: http://lattes.cnpq.br/8900240956357828
Orcid: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6820-8834
E-mail: rosariomiranda@phb.uespi.br

construction of 3 thematic categories based on the guiding question and object of study, involving: (1) Sociodemographic profile of those involved in school violence; (2) Risk factors for school violence; and, also, (3) Main causes of victimization. Final considerations: It is important to have educational strategies in listening to adolescents, enabling co-responsibilities in the processes of construction of the school scenario, through individual and collective awareness, collaborating to reduce violence against children and adolescents in the school environment.

Keywords: Adolescent. Child. School. Violence.

INTRODUCTION

Violence is part of human existence and manifests itself in a peculiar way in various social spaces, and can be practiced or reproduced by people, groups, institutions and peoples, presenting different forms (Assis; Njaine; Mariel, 2023). In this sense, violence is characterized as the use of physical force or power, in threat or practice, against oneself, another person, against a group or community, which results in suffering, death, psychological damage, or causes damage to the victim's development (Cerqueira; Bueno, 2023).

It can be said that violence is a social phenomenon that has historical roots, and its manifestations transcend criminality, as they shape the structures that govern society. This phenomenon permeates the most varied places and has been present, mainly, in the school context, initially idealized as a safe environment for training, development and intellectual transformation, in the face of the individual and social context (Silva; Negreiros, 2020).

Therefore, in the context of school violence against children and adolescents, there is a deficiency on the part of the public authorities in addressing the problem outlined by Law 8.069, which establishes the Statute of the Child and Adolescent. This legislation granted the State legal instruments for protection in cases of violence in childhood and adolescence (Nunes; Sales, 2016). The flaw becomes evident when realizing that, currently, the school environment is far from a safe and adequate educational place, in addition to contributing to the distortion of the basic principles of teaching, learning and education (Nesello *et al.*, 2014).

From this perspective, the definition of school violence can vary according to the territory, sexuality, regionality and age group of the people involved, among other factors. It is worth mentioning that violence in schools is a reality that clearly impacts the educational process of the individual in development and the construction of his or her knowledge (Silva; Negreiros, 2020).

In this regard, Farias *et al.*, (2022) highlight that there is a significant connection between school violence and students' behavioral, as well as emotional, problems. Such factors can have a direct influence on the quality of life of students, resulting in lower academic performance and impacting the teaching-learning process. In addition, this relationship can contribute to the reduction of concentration, thus compromising the effectiveness of learning and negatively influencing class attendance.

However, in search of a more comprehensive understanding of this scenario, it is imperative to investigate this demand, as it plays a crucial role in collaborating with

significant strategies and actions to be developed in the field of health and education. Thus, the objective of this study is to investigate the factors that are associated with the perpetuation of violence against children and adolescents in the school environment.

METHODOLOGY

An integrative literature review was used in the use of data, allowing the inclusion of experimental and non-experimental studies to understand the phenomenon. Its relevant characteristic involves the configuration of a sample through a multiple set of proposals, enabling a theoretical and crystallized panorama (Souza; Silva; Carvalho, 2010).

In order for the characteristics mentioned above to gain relevance, the integrative literature review has 6 phases involving: Elaboration of the guiding question; Search in literature; Data collection; Critical analysis of the studies; Discussion of results; and the presentation of the integrative review (Souza; Silva; Carvalho, 2010).

The elaboration of the guiding question was subsidized and adapted through the "PICo" search strategy that involves the population/patient/problem, the phenomenon of interest (*Interest*) and the context (*Context*) (Oliveira-Araújo, 2020). In this, the following were considered: Child and Adolescent (P), Violence (I) and School (Co). In this sense, it was asked: "What are the factors that are associated with the perpetuation of violence against children and adolescents in the school environment?".

The literature search was carried out in the "*Medline*", "*Web of Science*", "*Lilacs*" and "*Scopus" databases*. The following descriptors were selected: "Child and Adolescent"; "Violence" and "School". To enrich the investigation, associated terms and synonyms of the descriptors were used, available in Portuguese, English and Spanish. The descriptors were identified in the Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) platform and their counterparts in the *Medical Subject Headings* (MeSH). The descriptors were operated by the *Booleans AND* and *OR.*

Data collection was carried out through complete reading, evaluation of titles, abstracts and elimination of duplicate articles. Studies in Portuguese, English and Spanish were considered, with a time frame of 10 years. It should be noted that the search, of a double-blind nature, took place in October 2023. After identification, screening, eligibility and inclusion (Figure 1), the included studies were exported to an adapted instrument (Chart 1), containing: "authors, objective, method, results and year" (Souza; Silva; Carvalho, 2010).

The critical analysis of the selected studies was based on the levels of evidence, involving: (1) results from meta-analysis and multiple clinical studies; (2) individual studies

with experimental design; (3) quasi-experimental studies; (4) descriptive studies with a qualitative approach; (5) from case or experience reports; and (6) based on expert opinions (Souza; Silva; Carvalho, 2010).

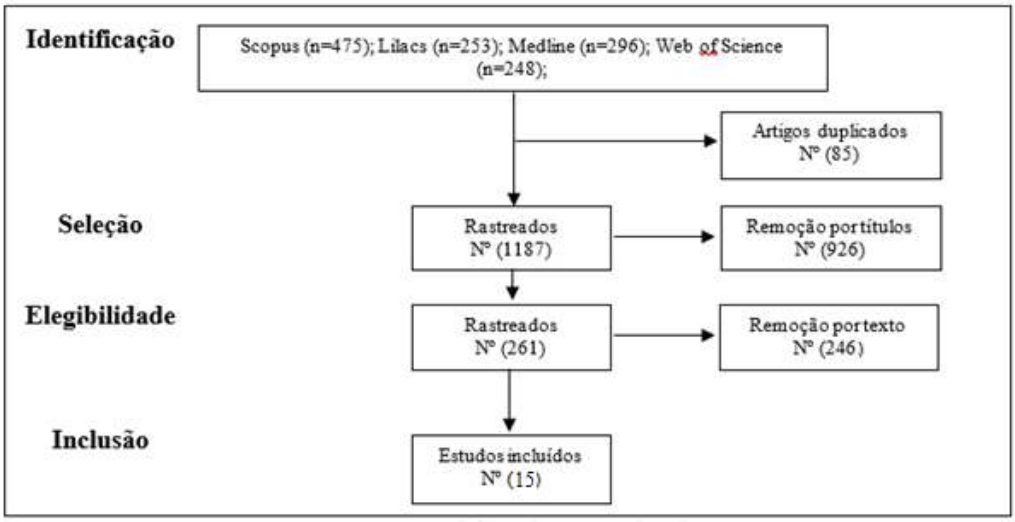
The discussion of the results took place through data triangulation, which is a research strategy combining different methods, perspectives and data about the phenomenon in question. It uses characteristics of dialectics in the search for overcoming demands in a cooperative way. This enables the construction of reliable data, with greater validity and comprehensiveness, through the process of thematic organization (Minayo, 2006).

The presentation of the review took place through the descriptive model, through the principles of scientific communication involving the results in association with the object of study and the guiding question (Minayo, 2006).

RESULTS

A total of 296 articles were obtained from Medline, 248 from *Web of Science*, 253 from *Lilacs* and 475 from *Scopus*, totaling 1272 documents. 85 duplicate documents were excluded, leaving 1187 articles. 926 documents were excluded due to lack of connection with the theme, leaving 261 articles. After the complete reading, 246 documents were excluded because they did not answer the guiding question, leaving 15 articles in the final composition of the integrative review. Such data described above are shown in flowchart format in Figure 1, below:

Figure 1 - Flowchart of the study selection process



Source: Developed by the authors (2023).

Subsequently, the included studies were exported to an instrument adapted in Chart 1, below, containing: "authors, objective, method, results and year". This instrument,

containing the main categorical elements of a scientific article, enabled the triangulation of data in the topic discussions.

Chart 1 – characterization of the selected studies

AUTHORS	OBJECTIVE	METHOD	RESULTS	YEAR
MALTA, A. C., *et al*.	To describe violent events experienced by school-age adolescents at school, in the school surroundings and in the family context, and to compare the results with those of the National Adolescent School Health Survey of 2009 and 2012.	Indicators related to violence involving adolescents were analyzed. Prevalence rates and 95% confidence intervals were calculated for events of interest, according to sex, type of school, and regions.	The prevalences were: insecurity on the way home to school (9.1%), insecurity at school (8.0%), physical aggression in the last 12 months (18.2%), involvement in fights in the last 12 months (20.7%), fight with a knife (8.3%), fight with a firearm (6.9%), physical aggression by a family member (11.6%) and having suffered serious injuries in the last 12 months (10.3%).	2014
SILVA, R. J. S., SOARES, N. M. M., A. C. C. O.	To identify the prevalence and factors associated with violent behavior among adolescents in Aracaju and the Metropolitan Region.	The study included 2207 adolescents (16.03±1.08 years) enrolled in high school in the state public network. Violent behavior was identified from question 14 of the YRBS-2007 questionnaire with answers categorized as "never" and "one or more times".	A higher prevalence was found in males in relation to the risk factors for the adoption of violent behavior: cigarette consumption (7.3%), alcohol consumption (39.1%) and marijuana use (3.4%). Data analysis used descriptive statistics and logistic regression with a hierarchical model at two levels: (a) sociodemographic variables and (b) behavioral variables.	2014
AZEREDO, C. M., LEVY, R. B., ARAYA, R. *et al.*	OBJECTIVE: To evaluate the relative importance of contextual (school and city) and individual-level factors to explain the variance in *verbal bullying* among a nationally representative sample of Brazilian adolescents.	59,348 students from 1,453 schools in 26 state capitals and the Federal District participated in the National School Health Survey among 9th grade students (PeNSE, 2009). Multilevel logistic regression was performed in a three-level model (individual, school, and city).	The 30-day prevalence of verbal *bullying* among these students was 14.2%. It found that 1.8% and 0.3% of the total variance in *bullying* occurred at the school level and the city level, respectively, and 97.9% at the individual level. At the city level, all included factors failed to demonstrate a significant association with *bullying* ($p < 0.05$), while at the school level, private schools had more *bullying* than public schools.	2015
EKER, H. H. *et al*.	To discover the prevalence and exposure to violence, which is a major public health problem and in schools, by determining the factors that affect it.	This cross-sectional study was conducted between March 2012 and May 2012. The population was 1575 students in the 9th grade, and the study concluded with	The proportions of each violence-related behavior are 35.8% and 14.1%, respectively, for boys, while 20.4% and 6.4% for girls. These behaviors are statistically more common among boys than girls ($p < 0.05$). It was found that there is a significant relationship between students' family	2015

		1405 students accepting to participate. A study questionnaire form established based on the "Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (YRBS)" prepared by the CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) was used as a data collection tool.	income level and involvement in a physical fight at school ($p < 0.05$).	
OLIVEIRA, W. A., *et al.*	To identify the characteristics and motives associated with *school bullying* by Brazilian adolescents.	This is a cross-sectional investigation, with data from an epidemiological survey (National School-based Health Survey), carried out in 2012. Data collection was carried out using a self-administered questionnaire and the analysis was performed using the SPSS software, version 20.	The prevalence of *bullying* identified in the study was 7.2%, being more frequent in males, in younger students, black and indigenous, and with mothers without any schooling. Among the causes/reasons for *bullying*, 51.2% could not specify, and the second highest frequency of victimization was related to body appearance (18.6%), followed by face appearance (16.2%), race/color (6.8%), sexual orientation (2.9%), religion (2.5%) and region of origin (1.7%)	2015
DALCIN, C. B. *et al.*	To identify the factors associated with violence in students from public schools located in the central region of Rio Grande do Sul	This is an observational, cross-sectional and analytical study. The sample consisted of 435 students between 10 and 19 years old. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire applied in the form of an interview. Associations between dependent and independent variables were taken from the Poisson regression model	The data analyzed showed a higher prevalence of violence and the variables male gender, greater number of siblings and low income, while religion was associated as an indicator of protection against psychological violence	2016
MELLO, F. C. M., *et al.*	To estimate the prevalence of *bullying*, from the perspective of the victim, in schools in the Southeast Region and to analyze its association with individual and family context variables.	Information from 19,660 adolescents from the National School-based Health Survey (PeNSE) was analyzed, calculating the association between *bullying* and sociodemographic	The prevalence of *bullying* was 7.8% (95%CI 6.5 - 9.2). After adjustment, it was found to be associated with: schoolchildren under 13 years of age (OR = 2.40; 1.4 - 3.93) ($p < 0.001$); protection for students aged 14, 15 and 16 years ($p < 0.0001$); males (OR = 1.47; 95%CI 1.35 - 1.59); black skin color (OR = 1.24 95%CI 1.11 - 1.40); yellow (OR = 1.38; 95%CI 1.14 - 1.6);	2016

		variables, risk behaviors, mental health and family context.	private school students (OR = 1.11 95%CI 1.01 - 1.23) and working students (OR = 1.30 95%CI 1.16 - 1.45).	
AL-BUHAIRAN, F., ABBAS O. A., EL-SAYED, D., BADRI, M., ALSHAHRI, S., VRIES, N.	To identify the association of risk behaviors with physical and mental health and academic performance.	A national cross-sectional survey, conducted in Saudi Arabia between 2011 and 2012. Data were analyzed using chi-square tests to identify associations, and odds ratios were calculated.	A total of 9073 students participated. Twenty-six percent of teens reported exposure to *bullying* in the previous 30 days. More men than women, and older teens were more exposed to *bullying*. In addition, exposure to physical violence and *bullying* were both associated with higher odds of having more frequent symptoms of depression and anxiety.	2017
CHO, M.K., KIM, M., SHIN, G.	Detect the inclination to *cyberbullying* young people in early adolescence, when aggression reaches its peak.	The study was a survey research, investigating participants who were 470 elementary school students in South Korea.	It is suggested that the experience of victimization by school violence and the experience of infliction of *cyberbullying* have an influence on the infliction of school violence. And the variables experience of victimization by *cyberbullying* and experience of victimization by school violence exert effects.	2017
GAETE, J., TORNERO, B., VALENZUELA, D., ROJAS-BARAHONA, CA., SALMIVALLI, C., VALENZUELA, E., ARAYA, R.	Study the association between the experience of *bullying* (as victims, bullies, or bystanders) and substance use.	Self-reported questionnaire that was developed based on similar instruments used elsewhere. Multivariate multilevel logistic regression analyses were used, controlling for several variables at the individual and school levels.	These findings add new *insights* to the study of the occurrence of *bullying* and substance use. Other factors, such as higher academic achievement, higher school adherence, and better parental monitoring, reduced the risk of any substance use, while experience of domestic violence and perceived social disorganization in the neighborhood increased risk.	2017
LE, H. T. H., *et al.*	Examine temporal patterns and predictors of *bullying roles* over the course of an academic year.	A total of 1424 middle and high school students aged 12 to 17 completed two anonymous, self-administered questionnaires six months apart in 2014 and 2015.	Multivariate multinomial logistic regressions indicated factors ranging from individual (age, gender, and mental health) to family (social support, parental supervision and monitoring, witnessing parental violence and conflict with siblings), school (perceived social support, teachers' attempt to stop *bullying* at school), and peers (social support, students' attempt to stop *bullying* at school) have significant associations with levels of involvement with *bullying*.	2017
HAN, Z., ZHANG, G., ZHANG, H.	To analyze the prevalence of *school bullying* and the correlation with various school attributes.	Questions about school *bullying* were adopted primarily from the *School Crime Supplement* (SCS)	Overall, the incidences of victimization from self-reported bullying, perpetration of *bullying,* and witnessing bullying were 26.1%, 9.03%, and 28.9%, respectively.	2017

		to the National Survey of Criminal Victimization developed by the National Center for Education Statistics in the United States.	Among the 3,675 students, 2,654 of them had never experienced a *bullying* scenario in the last year. 271 of the 960 victims were also perpetrators, sharing 28.23% of all victims. 271 of the 332 perpetrators were also victims of *bullying*, sharing about 81.63% of the total perpetrators.	
YANG, S. A., KIM, D. H.	To identify psychosocial and contextual factors associated with 3 types of bystander behavior among young Koreans.	A descriptive and cross-sectional study was conducted among 416 students in the 7th and 8th grades of an elementary school in Korea. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, the Korean version of the Social Problem-Solving Inventory.	Empathy, relationships with teachers, attitudes toward *bullying*, and concerns about being bullied were significantly associated with all 3 types of bystander behaviors. Although, self-esteem and social problem-solving ability were significantly associated only with victim-advocate behaviors.	2017
MARCOLINO, E. C., *et al.*	To analyze the prevalence of victimization and aggression by *bullying* and typologies associated with sociodemographic factors and risk behaviors in students.	This was a cross-sectional study carried out in municipal elementary schools in Campina Grande, Paraíba State, Brazil, with a sample of 678 adolescents enrolled in grades 6 to 9. The data were updated with the SPSS statistical school program with the chi-square test of Person.	The prevalence of bullying victimization reached 29.5%, with a predominance of *psychological bullying*, 23.3%, and mostly male involvement. Regarding bullying, 8.4% of the students stated that they bully their peers.	2018
SILVA, A. N., MARQUES, E. S., PERES, M. F. T., AZEREDO, C. M.	The objective of this study was to analyze the temporal trend of *verbal bullying*, domestic violence and involvement in fights with weapons among adolescents in Brazilian state capitals between 2009 and 2015.	Logistic regression adjusted for sociodemographic and behavioral characteristics was performed, with analysis of each type of violence in Brazil and in the capitals, according to sex. The trends were spatialized.	For the group of capitals, there was an increase, between 2009 and 2015, of 12% (95%CI: 1.11-1.14) for domestic violence, of 10% (95%CI: 1.08-1.11) for *verbal bullying*, of 7% (95%CI: 1.05-1.09) for involvement in fights with firearms, and of 7% (95%CI: 1.05-1.08) for involvement in fights with bladed weapons. In all capitals, there was an increase in domestic violence. In 96.3%, 70.4% and 62.9% of these cities, there was an increase in verbal *bullying*, involvement in fights with knives and involvement in fights with firearms.	2019

Source: Developed by the authors (2024).

DISCUSSION

Through data triangulation, 3 thematic categories were elaborated, based on the guiding question and object of study, involving: (1) Sociodemographic profile of those involved in school violence; (2) Risk factors for school violence; and (3) Main causes of victimization.

CATEGORY 1: SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THOSE INVOLVED IN SCHOOL VIOLENCE

The first theme identified, and the most present in the studies found, is the sociodemographic profile of students involved in school violence. This profile is predominantly male, black, younger students, with an average age of 13 years and with low education (Mello *et al*., 2016; Han *et al*., 2017; Silva *et al*., 2014; Yang, Kim, 2017). Thus, male adolescents are more involved in situations of violence on public roads and schools, which may explain the lack of interest and/or fear about this topic (Malta *et al*., 2014).

The context of low family income (Eker *et al*., 2015), a greater number of siblings (Dalcin *et al*., 2016) and mothers with no or little schooling (Oliveira *et al*., 2015), as well as family breakdown related to the separation of parents (Azeredo *et al.,* 2015) were identified.

In addition, being male and in the young age group is presumed to be prevalent in most of the findings, since there is still a relationship between gender and violence. This fact leads us to reflect on issues related to toxic masculinity and structural machismo still rooted in society as a whole (Cho *et al*., 2017).

In this, the culture is perpetrated in which young men feel superior by demonstrating brute force to accept others, in addition to the fact that it is a way of not having their sexuality questioned, that is, it is necessary to be violent and hostile to have masculinity intact (Silva *et al*., 2019).

Therefore, young age is linked to students' immaturity in respecting differences. It is also related to the absence of self-control and the ability to judge "right and wrong". It is also noteworthy that controlling one's own behaviors without external instructions or supervision is usually achieved around 8 to 10 years of age, and is maintained for the rest of one's life. Thus, those who have strong self-control have a tendency to avoid violence and bad behaviors, regardless of the situation, and can curb school violence by performing desirable behaviors (Cho *et al*., 2017; Costa *et al*., 2021).

CATEGORY 2: RISK FACTORS FOR SCHOOL VIOLENCE

At first, the risk factors for school violence were associated with students who had a regular consumption of alcohol and cigarettes, as well as for the consumption of marijuana. Thus, such as young people who were in a relationship, those who regularly missed classes, those who reported exposure to domestic and community violence, and those who lived in a neighborhood with high crime (Marcolino *et al*., 2018; Azeredo *et al*., 2015).

Adolescents with mental health problems were more exposed to the risk of becoming victims or aggressors over time. Among the factors related to school violence is family income, since the involvement of adolescents with low purchasing power is associated with situations of violence (Mello *et al*., 2016; Silva *et al*., 2014; Le *et al*., 2017; Marcolino *et al*., 2018; Gaete *et al*., 2017).

The cause of this violence is based on the economic inequalities of the students involved. It means that adolescents who do not own the material possessions of their peers, including certain visible lifestyle assets and opportunities to participate in leisure activities, are at greater risk of being excluded or even intimidated (Silva *et al.,* 2019).

It is also known that adolescents in disadvantaged socioeconomic families face more adverse experiences in their family environments, due to the stress caused by financial problems, generating emotional instabilities and an environment prone to interpersonal conflicts (Silva *et al.,* 2019).

CATEGORY 3: MAIN CAUSES OF VICTIMIZATION

Faced with the causes of victimization of school violence, studies showed that half of the students did not even know the motivation for suffering *bullying*. Some factors identified by the students with the focus of *bullying* were: having a chronic disease (Al-buhairan *et al.,* 2017), body appearance, being underweight or overweight, facial appearance, race/color, sexual orientation, religion, and region of origin (Oliveira *et al.,* 2015; Azeredo *et al*., 2015).

It is evident how school violence affects the subjects who are involved, whether they are victims or aggressors, and can generate serious psychic consequences, and "victims can suffer from relationship and internalization problems related to anxiety, depression and low self-esteem" (Oliveira *et al.,* 2015). Thus, the feelings and signs revealed by the subjects cannot be ignored, nor underestimated, as no one will be able to put themselves in the place of the other to effectively describe the intensity and dimension of their pain (Silva *et al*., 2019).

Depression is the main significant predictor of bullying victimization among students, and is characterized by sadness, isolation, loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities,

lethargy, and suicidal and self-harming behaviors. Students with depressive symptoms may appear weak and unable to resist acts of aggression from their peers (Costa *et al*., 2021).

Therefore, the professionals involved with these adolescents must know how to recognize these symptoms, as a way to prevent the worsening of depression, investigating the causes and intervening in the relationships of abuse that may be inflicting these adolescents (Costa *et al*., 2021).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The evidence found indicates that violence in the school environment in children and adolescents is a reality experienced by many young people and little debated in the social environment.

It is worth noting that the perpetuation of these factors must be analyzed not only individually, but in a multifactorial way, as it has been observed that there is an interrelationship with situations of violence instituted in the family and/or community context, as growing up and developing in environments of extreme social inequality and exposed to vulnerabilities leads adolescents to acquire a normalized conception of violence. in order to reproduce this behavior in conflict situations.

In this context, the main protective measures involve the promotion of self-esteem, autonomy and empowerment, as well as the encouragement of learning, seeking to establish dialogical and respectful relationships between teachers and students, leading to the development of self-control.

Thus, it is necessary that the production of scientific studies use educational strategies in listening to adolescents, enabling co-responsibilities in the processes of construction of the school scenario, through an individual and collective awareness of repulsion to aggressive, prejudiced and inopportune attitudes, collaborating to reduce the spread of factors associated with the perpetuation of violence against children and adolescents in the school environment.

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