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VIOLENCE AGAINST ADOLESCENTS IN BRAZIL: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GIRLS AND BOYS

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to analyze the differences between violence against adolescent girls and boys in Brazil. This is a cross-sectional analytical study, with data on interpersonal and self-inflicted violence from the Information System for Diseases and Notification, 2019, Brazil. Poisson regression was performed to estimate the Prevalence Ratio, with a significance level of 5%. The variable 'victim's sex' was analyzed according to types of violence, aggressors' bonds and agents of aggression. For girls, lower prevalences were identified for physical violence (PR=0.973), child labor (PR=0.816) and neglect/abandonment (PR= 0.941), and higher prevalences for psychological (PR=1.083), sexual (PR= 1.292) and self-inflicted (PR=1.168) violence, $p<0.05$, compared to boys. Girls had more notifications of violence perpetrated by spouses (PR=1.422), boyfriends (PR=1.499) and stepfathers (1.230), $p<0.05$. For agents of aggression, poisoning/intoxication and threats in violence against girls are highlighted; and for violence against boys, bodily force/beatings and the use of objects and firearms ($p < 0.05$). The profile of violence against girls differs from that of boys, requiring different measures to prevent violence in adolescence, according to the characteristics of each group.

Keywords: Violence. Adolescent. Notification. Gender Violence.

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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) is the period between 10 and 19 years old and refers to a process marked by cognitive, social and outlook changes on life. In this context, the adolescent population is vulnerable to various types of violence (Brasil, 2007; Martin *et al*., 2015; Valencia *et al*., 2020).

On a global level, Brazil ranks second in terms of the number of murders of children and adolescents, behind only Nigeria. In this context, violence is recognized as one of the most recurrent public health problems in society, and there is a need to protect adolescents in order to contribute to their healthy growth and development (Souto *et al*., 2018; Vasconcelos *et al*., 2020).

Cases of violence against adolescents happen regardless of social class, race, religion or culture. However, socioeconomic, familial, and demographic factors are associated with a higher risk. In addition, most victims are silenced or remain silent, depending on the environment in which the violent act occurs. As for the consequences of violence, they can be harmful, given that the psychological dimension is conditioned by the social and learning also occurs from experience, which can transform victims into aggressors (De Magalhães *et al*., 2017; Souto *et al*., 2018).

It is known, with regard to the sex of the adolescent victim, that girls are more frequently violated than boys. Females are predominant among the victims, while males play a leading role among the aggressors. In the vast majority of cases, gender violence falls on women, children and adolescents. The phenomenon of violence has mobilized several government agencies and different areas of knowledge, in search of prevention and intervention strategies to cope with the problem (Costa *et al*., 2007; Gessner; Da Fonseca; De Oliveira, 2014; Da Silva; Gonçalves, 2019; Silva *et al*., 2020).

The fact that girls are mainly among the victims of violence occurs as a result of the inequalities and dominations imposed by the patriarchal culture in gender relations. Furthermore, through these relationships, boys tend to establish a bond of possession and power directed to the female figure (Moreira *et al*., 2017). To illustrate this situation, it is noted that, in most cases, girls are the main victims of sexual violence, while among boys the typology that stands out is physical (Gessner; Da Fonseca; De Oliveira, 2014).

In this context, it is understood that the fight against the problem of violence is complex. There are difficulties regarding complaints, since they require immediate protection measures and psychosocial care actions aimed at victims (Silva *et al*., 2017).

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Despite this, it is important to mention the first global report on the situation of violence prevention, prepared by the WHO in 2014. This document assesses the measures adopted by countries to prevent and respond to interpersonal violence (WHO, 2014).

The above-mentioned report notes that violence has been considerably prevented throughout the world. Prevention programmes have been implemented in several countries, and in more than half of them, protection and support services for victims have been put in place. In addition, preventive laws have been enacted in approximately 80% of countries. However, there are still gaps in knowledge regarding the extent of the problems, the quality, the scope of the programs implemented, access to services by victims, compliance with current laws and the mechanisms responsible for coordinating the multisectoral work offered (WHO, 2014).

Therefore, it is important to expand knowledge about violence in Brazil to support coping strategies. From this perspective, this study aims to analyze differences between violence against adolescent boys and girls in Brazil.

METHODOLOGY

This is a cross-sectional analytical study, using data from notifications of interpersonal and self-inflicted violence from the Information System for Diseases and Notification (SINAN). Data were extracted from the *Tabnet* application of the Department of Informatics of the Unified Health System (DATASUS), Ministry of Health, Brazil. They refer to records made in 2019, accessed and saved in October 2022.

All notifications of violence against adolescents were included in the study, considering the age group between 10 and 19 years, as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO, 1986).

Sociodemographic characteristics were investigated by the following variables: sex (female, male); ethnicity/race/skin color (white, black, yellow, brown, and indigenous); and dichotomized age group, according to Gonçalves (2016): pre-adolescence between 10 and 14 years old and adolescence between 15 and 19 years old. The place where violence against adolescents occurred (residence, housing, school, place of sports practice, bar or similar, public road, commerce/services, and industry/construction) was also investigated; the suspicion of alcohol use by the aggressor (yes, no); the sex of the aggressor(s) (female, male, aggressors of both sexes); the life cycle of the aggressor categorized as adolescent 10-19 years old and non-adolescent; the variables of the types of bond with the

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victim: father, mother, stepfather, stepmother, spouse, ex-spouse, boyfriend (a), ex-boyfriend (a), stranger (a), brother (a), boss / boss, the variables of the types of violence practiced: physical, psychological, torture, sexual violence, human trafficking, financial/economic violence, negligence/abandonment, child labor and self-inflicted violence and; finally, the variables of aggression agents: bodily force/beating, hanging, blunt object, sharp object, hot substance/object, poisoning/intoxication, firearm and threat.

Data organization and statistical analysis were performed using the IBM SPSS software, version 22.0 for *Windows*. The differences between violence against adolescent boys and girls were based on the dependent variable, sex of the victim. For the analysis, the variables independent of the aggressor's profile (gender; suspicion of alcohol use; bond/kinship with the victim and life cycle) were considered; of the different types of violence (with the exception of human trafficking because it presented a percentage of less than 0.05% of notifications) and; variables of the agents of violence. Bivariate and multiple Poisson regression analyses were performed, with robust variance, to estimate the crude and adjusted Prevalence Ratio (PR), with a 95% confidence interval (95%CI). Variables associated with $p \leq 0.20$ in the bivariate analysis were considered in the multiple analysis to calculate the adjusted PR. In the multivariate analysis, the significance level was set at $p \leq 0.05$.

This study used secondary data in the public domain, and did not require approval by the Research Ethics Committee (REC). However, all ethical aspects involved in scientific research were respected.

RESULTS

In 2019, out of a total of 405,697 reported cases of interpersonal and self-inflicted violence in Brazil, 103,728 (25.6%) referred to violence against adolescents. Of these victims, 72.1% were female and 47.5% brown. The majority (76.1%) of the cases occurred at home and the most frequent violence was physical and self-inflicted, both with 49.6%, as shown in Table 1. It was found that 42 adolescents were victims of human trafficking (0.04% of the 101,154 valid notifications for this variable).

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Table 1: Profile of adolescent victims of violence, place of occurrence and type of violence. Brazil, 2019.

Profile	n	%
Sex*		
Female	74.806	72,1
Male	28.905	27,9
Race/color/ethnicity *		
White	40.286	42,1
Black	7.939	8,3
Yellow	763	0,8
Brown	45.375	47,5
Indigenous	1.225	1,3
Age group*		
10 to 14 years old	39.873	38,4
15 to 19 years old	63.855	61,6
Place of occurrence*	**n**	**%**
Residence	67.209	76,1
Housing	1.118	1,3
School	4.333	4,9
Sports venue	389	0,4
Bar or similar	1.295	1,5
Public road	12.878	14,6
Trade/services	1.000	1,1
Industry/Construction	134	0,2
Type of violence*	n	%
Physical Violence		
Yes	50.762	49,6
No	51,658	50,4
Psychological		
Yes	16.469	16,3
No	84.821	83,7
Torture		
Yes	1.726	1,7
No	99.234	98,3
Sexual		
Yes	19.903	19,6
No	81.549	80,4
Financial/Economic		
Yes	465	0,5
No	100.601	99,5
Neglect / Abandonment		
Yes	8.636	8,5
No	92.703	91,5
Child labour		
Yes	872	0,9
No	100.283	99,1
Self-inflicted		
Yes	50.762	49,6
No	51.658	50,4

*Data loss.

The profile of the aggressor was characterized by people with no suspicion of alcohol use (79.6%) and adolescents aged 10 to 19 years (59.9%), for all notifications of violence against adolescents. The mother, strangers and father appeared more frequently

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among the perpetrators of violence. The most commonly used agents in violence against adolescents were: bodily force/beatings (30.7%) and poisoning/intoxication (26.6%), as shown in Table 2. Violence was perpetrated by males (51.4%), females (42.9%) and both sexes (5.7%), when committed by more than two aggressors.

Table 2: Profile of the aggressor and agent of violence against adolescents. Brazil, 2019.

Profile of the aggressor*	**Yes n(%)**	**No n(%)**
Bond with the victim		
Father	8.831(9,0)	88.866(91,0)
Mother	9.301(9,5)	88.632(90,5)
Stepfather	3.889(4,0)	93.680(96,0)
Stepmother	306(0,3)	97.316(99,7)
Spouse	3.495(3,6)	94.227(96,4)
Former spouse	1.156(1,2)	96,550(98,8)
Boyfriend or girlfriend	4.287(4,4)	93.344(95,6)
Ex-boyfriend	1.376(1,4)	96.235(98,6)
Unknown	9.117(9,3)	88.552(90,7)
Brother	2.199(2,3)	95.398(97,7)
Boss/boss	189(0,2)	97.502(99,8)
Suspected alcohol use	14.496(20,4)	56.487(79,6)
Life cycle (10-19 years)	52.288(59,9)	35.002(40,1)
Agents of violence*		
Body force/beating	30.565(30,7)	69.139(69,3)
Hanging	3.718(3,7)	95.496(96,3)
Blunt object	3.639(3,7)	95.478(96,3)
Sharp object	15.969(16,1)	83.499(83,9)
Hot Substance/Object	663(0,7)	98.510(99,3)
Poisoning/Poisoning	26.479(26,6)	73.204(73,4)
Firearm	3.190(3,2)	96.060(96,8)
Menace	10.037(10,1)	88.945(89,9)

*Data losses

Female victims had lower prevalences of physical violence (PR = 0.973), child labor (PR = 0.816) and neglect/abandonment (PR = 0.941) when compared to boys. However, they had higher prevalences for psychological violence (PR = 1.083), sexual violence (PR = 1.292) and self-inflicted violence (PR = 1.168). Torture had the same prevalence for girls and boys, as well as no significant difference for financial/economic violence ($p > 0.05$), as shown in Table 3.

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Table 3: Differences between violence against girls and boys according to type of violence. Brazil, 2019.

	Violence against adolescents					
Type of violence	**Girls n(%)**	**Boys n(%)**	**PR (95%CI)* brute**	**p-value**	**PR(95%CI)* adjusted**	**p-value**
Physics						
No	40.498 (54,8)	11.160 (39,1)	1		1	
Yes	33.352 (45,2)	17.410 (60,9)	0,906 (0,902-0,909)	<0.001	0,973 (0,967-0,978)	<0.001
Psychological						
No	60.559 (82,7)	24.262 (86,4)	1		1	
Yes	12.666 (17,3)	3.803 (13,6)	1,045 (1,038-1,050)	<0.001	1,083 (1,076-1,089)	<0.001
Torture						
No	71.729 (98,3)	27.505 (98,3)	1			
Yes	1.260 (1,7)	466 (1,7)	1,006 (0,989-1,022)	0,506	--	--
Sexual						
No	55.037 (75,0)	26.512 (94,6)	1		1	
Yes	18.379 (25,0)	1.524 (5,4)	1,231 (1,225-1,236)	<0.001	1,292 (1,284-1,299)	<0.001
Financial/ Economic						
No	72.749 (99,6)	27.852 (99,5)	1			
Yes	327 (0,4)	138 (0,5)	0,984 (0,953-1,016)	0,344	--	--
Neglect / Abandonment						
No	68.555 (93,6)	24.148 (85,8)	1		1	
Yes	4.653 (6,4)	3.983 (14,2)	0,863 (0,856-0,869)	<0.001	0,941 (0,933-0,950)	<0.001
Child labour						
No	72.847 (99,6)	27.436 (97,8)	1		1	
Yes	261 (0,4)	611 (2,2)	0,750 (0,735-0,762)	<0.001	0,816 (0,801-0,831)	<0.001
Self-inflicted						
No	39.197 (54,7)	18.329 (67,4)	1		1	
Yes	32.502 (45,3)	8.867 (32,6)	1,086 (1,081-1,090)	<0.001	1,168 (1,161-1,175)	<0.001

*PR = Prevalence Ratio – Poisson regression. 95%CI = 95% Confidence Interval.

Adolescent girls were more frequently assaulted by females (PR = 1.244); suspected of alcohol use (PR = 1.008); parents (PR = 1.122); stepfathers (PR = 1.230); spouses (PR = 1.422); ex-spouses (PR = 1.391); boyfriends and girlfriends (PR = 1.499); ex-boyfriends (PR = 1.418); strangers (PR = 1.035) and sibling aggressors (PR = 1.092), when compared to boys. In contrast, girls had lower prevalences of violence by

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aggressors of both sexes (PR = 0.774); adolescents aged 10 to 19 years (PR = 0.868); mothers (PR = 0.693); and stepmothers (PR = 0.779), as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Differences between violence against girls and boys according to the profile of the aggressor. Brazil, 2019.

	Violence against adolescents					
Profile of the Aggressor	**Girls n(%)**	**Boys n(%)**	**PR (95%CI)* brute**	**p-value**	**PR(95%CI)* adjusted**	**p-value**
Sex						
Male	29.329 (41,5)	19.767 (79,4)	1		1	
Female	38.198 (54,1)	2.799 (11,2)	0,978 (0,969-0,988)	<0.001	1,244 (1,222-1,267)	<0.001
Both	3.062 (4,3)	2.343 (9,4)	0,745 (0,738-0,752)	<0.001	0,774 (0,761-0,788)	<0.001
Suspicion of alcohol use						
No	42.533 (80,5)	13.954 (76,8)	1		1	
Yes	10.275 (19,5)	4.221 (23,2)	0,966 (0,960-0,971)	<0.001	1,008 (1,002-1,015)	0,008
Adolescent						
No	25.160 (38,7)	9.842 (44,2)	1		1	
Yes	39.880 (61,3)	12.408 (55,8)	1,035 (1,031-1,040)	<0.001	0,868 (0,862-0,874)	<0.001
Father						
No	66.162 (92,6)	22.704 (86,6)	1		1	
Yes	5.305 (7,4)	3.526 (13,4)	0,897 (0,890-0,904)	<0.001	1,122 (1,107-1,136)	<0.001
Mother						
No	66.412 (92,7)	22.220 (84,4)	1		1	
Yes	5.207 (7,3)	4,094 (15,6)	0,869 (0,862-0,875)	<0.001	0,693 (0,683-0,703)	<0.001
Stepfather						
No	68.305 (95,6)	25.375 (97,0)	1		1	
Yes	3.115 (4,4)	774 (3,0)	1,060 (1,048-1,072)	<0.001	1,230 (1,212-1,247)	<0.001
Stepmother						
No	71.255 (99,7)	26.061 (99,6)	1		1	
Yes	206 (0,3)	100 (0,4)	0,955 (0,918-0,994)	0,025	0,779 (0,741-0,820)	<0.001
Spouse						
No	68.111 (95,3)	26.116 (99,5)	1		1	
Yes	3.373 (4,7)	122 (0,5)	1,234 (1,227-1,242)	<0.001	1,422 (1,406-1,439)	<0.001
Former spouse						
No	70.373 (98,5)	26.187 (99,8)	1		1	
Yes	1.107 (1,5)	49 (0,2)	1,220 (1,206-1,233)	<0.001	1,391 (1,368-1,416)	<0.001
Boyfriend (a)						
No	67.253 (94,1)	26.091 (99,6)	1		1	
				<0.001		

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Yes	4.184 (5,9)	103 (0,4)	1,25 (1,244-1,256)		1,499 (1,486-1,513)	<0.001
Ex-boyfriend						
No	70.086 (98,1)	26.149 (99,8)	1		1	
Yes	1.329 (1,9)	47 (0,2)	1,230 (1,218-1,242)	<0.001	1,418 (1,395-1,441)	<0.001
Unknown						
No	66.339 (92,8)	22.213 (84,8)	1		1	
Yes	5.134 (7,2)	3.983 (15,2)	0,870 (0,864-0,877)	<0.001	1,035 (1,022-1,048)	<0.001
Brother						
No	69.939 (97,9)	25.459 (97,3)	1		1	
Yes	1.491 (2,1)	708 (2,7)	0,959 (0,944-0,973)	<0.001	1,092 (1,071-1,113)	<0.001
Boss/Boss						
No	71.383 (99,9)	26.119 (99,6)	1			
Yes	80 (0,1)	109 (0,4)	0,804 (0,769-0,841)	<0.001	--	--

*PR = Prevalence Ratio – Poisson regression. 95%CI = 95% Confidence Interval.

Girls had lower prevalences of violence by the agents of aggression: bodily force/beating (PR = 0.980); hanging (PR = 0.953), blunt object (PR = 0.915), hot object/substance (PR = 0.947) and firearm (PR = 0.742). However, poisoning/poisoning (PR = 1.086) and threat (PR = 1.131) were more prevalent among them when compared to boys. The use of sharp objects was not associated with the gender of the adolescent victim (Table 5).

Table 5: Differences between violence against girls and boys according to agents of aggression. Brazil, 2019.

	Violence against adolescents					
Agent of violence	**Girls n(%)**	**Boys n(%)**	**PR (95%CI)* brute**	**p-value**	**PR (95%CI)* Adjusted**	**p-value**
Body force/beating						
No	50.711 (70,5)	18.428 (66,3)	1		1	
Yes	21.200 (29,5)	9.365 (33,7)	0,967 (0,965-0,974)	<0.001	0,980 (0,973-0,984)	<0.001
Hanging						
No	69.182 (96,6)	26.314 (95,4)	1		1	
Yes	2.439 (3,4)	1.279 (4,6)	0,949 (0,938-0,960)	<0.001	0,953 (0,942-0,965)	<0.001
Blunt object						
No	69.386 (97,0)	26.092 (94,6)	1		1	
Yes	2.142 (3,0)	1.497 (5,4)	0,902 (0,892-0,912)	<0.001	0,915 (0,904-0,926)	<0.001

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Sharp object No Yes	60.299 (84,0) 11.494 (16,0)	23.200 (83,8) 4.475 (16,2)	1 0,998 (0,992-1,004)	0,539	-	-
Substance/ Hot object No Yes	71.155 (99,4) 428 (0,6)	27.355 (99,1) 235 (0,9)	1 0,943 (0,918-0,969)	<0.001	1 0,947 (0,921-0,974)	<0.001
Poisoning/ Poisoning No Yes	50.578 (70,2) 21.451 (29,8)	22.626 (81,8) 5.028 (18,2)	1 1,100 (1,095-1,105)	<0.001	1 1,086 (1,080-1,092)	<0.001
Firearm No Yes	70.699 (98,8) 871 (1,2)	25.361 (91,6) 2.319 (8,4)	1 0,732 (0,725-0,738)	<0.001	1 0,742 (0,735-0,750)	<0.001
Menace No Yes	63.226 (88,5) 8.234 (11,5)	25.719 (93,4) 1.803 (6,6)	1 1,093 (1,086-1,100)	<0.001	1 1,131 (1,123-1,140)	<0.001

*PR = Prevalence Ratio – Poisson regression. 95%CI = 95% Confidence Interval.

DISCUSSION

Notifications of violence against adolescents contribute to an analysis of the epidemiological panorama of cases, providing subsidies for the development of effective public policies and for the organization of services (Pereira *et al*., 2020).

In this context, notifications of violence against adolescent boys and girls in Brazil in 2019 were quantitatively relevant, accounting for more than 25.0% of the total number of victims. The number of cases of violence against individuals in this life cycle could be explained, in part, by the inability to escape from the aggressors and/or to defend themselves. Likewise, the fragile personality of adolescents makes them easy targets for the perpetuation of such acts, in addition to the immaturity to understand the situations created by the aggressor (Hino *et al*., 2019; Leite *et al*., 2022).

Regarding the demographic profile of the adolescent victims, most were female and were in the age group of 15 to 19 years. The study by Pereira *et al*. (2020) analyzed compulsory notifications available on the SINAN website, in the period from 2011 to 2017, totaling 1,429,931 cases of interpersonal or self-inflicted violence. Of the reported cases, most were female (60.2%) and were in the age group of 15 to 19 years (60.3%).

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This same demographic profile of adolescent victims was also observed in a cross-sectional study carried out in Espírito Santo, with data from epidemiological surveillance, between 2011 and 2018, with records of 3,094 cases of violence. Of these, most victims were girls and between 15 and 19 years old (Leite *et al*., 2022). The higher prevalence of violence against women is explained by historical and cultural factors, such as exploitation, subordination, and discrimination. However, it is observed that adolescent girls have struggled against gender issues, which place them in positions of greater vulnerability, with freedom movements and the search to overcome stereotypes of femininity (Barufaldi *et al*., 2017; Leite *et al*., 2022).

Although the present study found a higher prevalence of violence among adolescents of brown color, it is argued in the literature that black victims are more exposed to situations of violence. This fact is due to situations of insecurity and because they are more subject to social inequalities (Monteiro *et al*., 2015). In this study, residence appeared more frequently among the places where violence occurred. Results in agreement with the literature (Souto *et al.,* 2018; Leite *et al.,* 2022).

Another aspect to highlight concerns the sex of the aggressors, which were mostly male. This result points to the masked reality of intrafamily violence and its gender character, given that the naturalization of machismo and oppression is reinforced when observing the male individual as the main perpetrator of such violence (Pinto *et al*., 2021).

The most frequent types of interpersonal violence against adolescents were, respectively, physical, sexual, psychological violence and neglect/abandonment. This typology is described in the literature as more recurrent (Macedo *et al*., 2019). The high frequency of self-inflicted violence among adolescents is also noteworthy in the present study, with a value similar to that of physical violence.

Physical violence is considered a consequence of other types of violence and men are more prone to such an act. The high proportion among men is due to greater exposure to risks in public spaces (Araújo; De Ataíde, 2017; Malta *et al*., 2017). In order for these actions to be reduced among adolescents, it is necessary to promote behavioral control actions and the social environment in which they find themselves (Valois; Zullig; Revels, 2017). In this study, physical violence was more frequent among adolescent boys.

As for self-inflicted violence, it was more prevalent among adolescent girls. According to the literature, this type of violence is one of the most common causes of death among young people, occurring most of the time in their own homes. Risk factors are

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mental disorders, lack of interest in usual activities, poor conduct in classroom activities, anxiety, *bullying*, alcohol and drug abuse, lack of affection, lack of emotional management, family and relationship problems, and low socioeconomic status (Garisch *et al*., 2015; Epstein *et al*., 2020; Bike; De Albuquerque; Oliveira-Filho, 2021).

In this study, sexual violence was more prevalent among girls when compared to boys. A similar result was found in a descriptive research, carried out with data from SINAN, in Rio Grande do Sul, between 2014 and 2018. In this study, of the 8,716 notifications of sexual violence against children and adolescents, 82.2% were female (Lourenço *et al*., 2023). Sexual violence against adolescents is a relevant phenomenon that has a great impact on the victim, and can result in damage to health and social relationships (Foshee *et al*., 2016). From this perspective, it should be mentioned that evidence-based preventive health activities are appropriate and successful interventions (Rivera *et al*., 2021).

In addition, there is Law No. 14,811/2024, which provides, through the National Policy for Preventing and Combating Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Adolescents, the improvement of preventive actions, the strengthening of protection networks, the promotion of knowledge production and the guarantee of specialized and networked care, aimed at children and adolescents subjected to sexual exploitation, as well as their families. In addition, it defines democratic spaces for participation and social control, giving priority to councils for the rights of children and adolescents (Brasil, 2024).

Psychological violence was more prevalent among girls, while neglect/abandonment affected boys more. A similar result was found in an epidemiological study on violence against adolescents, registered in SINAN between 2011 and 2018, in Espírito Santo. Psychological violence occurred more frequently in the victim's home, by a single male aggressor. Negligence, in most cases, was committed by someone in the family and female (Pinto *et al*., 2021).

The fact that women are the main perpetrators of neglect/abandonment can be explained by the almost hegemonization of the position of care entrusted to the female figure. Thus, it is necessary to qualify health care professionals, as adequate listening is capable of transforming contexts of naturalization of violence (Pinto *et al*., 2021).

It is worth mentioning that, in most cases, the aggressors of adolescents are the biological parents or people close to the family, who have easy access to the residence (Piovezan *et al*., 2018). In this study, it was observed that adolescents were the main

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perpetrators of violent acts, followed by their mothers, strangers and fathers. In the analysis between girls and boys victims, it was found that there was a predominance of aggressors with a paternal bond for girls (fathers and stepfathers) and for boys, the maternal figure (mothers and stepmothers).

In a survey at the Social Assistance Reference Center, it was found that the mother was the main aggressor, followed by the father and the stepfather/stepmother. In this sense, it is pertinent to take a close look at the possible aggressors, considering that it may be a family member with easy access to the adolescent's residence. In addition, adolescents, as well as children, have difficulty in revealing the violence suffered, in addition to being an event with slow resolution due to weaknesses in the system and legal procedures, causing victims to be revictimized, including by minimizing the seriousness of the facts (Da Silva *et al*., 2017). A predictor for violence is the consumption of alcoholic beverages, both for the aggressor and the victim (De Carvalho *et al*., 2017). In this study, suspected alcohol use was associated with a higher prevalence of violence against adolescent girls.

Regarding the means of aggression of violence, an epidemiological study that analyzed the notifications related to self-inflicted violence in adolescents in Brazil in the period from 2009 to 2016, available in the SINAN database and in population estimates from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), stands out. Self-aggression is a complex and multifactorial phenomenon, and can be self-inflicted by physical violence, bodily force/beating, sharp objects and other means, which were associated with boys; while self-inflicted violence by poisoning was associated with female gender (De Brito *et al.,* 2021). In the present study, the use of sharp objects was not associated with the gender of the adolescent victim; Violence against girls had a higher prevalence of the use of poisons/intoxication and threats, while boys had the highest prevalence of bodily force/beatings, hanging, use of blunt objects, hot substances/objects and use of firearms.

As a limitation of the study, the data losses in certain research variables stand out, as it is a secondary database, subject to information biases. However, the conduction of multiple analysis to verify associations between variables and calculate adjusted prevalence ratios stands out as an important point of the study. In this context, the need to correctly fill out the notification forms for interpersonal and self-inflicted violence is reinforced to avoid loss of information. To this end, commitment is needed on the part of health professionals, teachers and managers.

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CONCLUSION

The study identifies differences between notifications of violence against adolescent boys and girls in Brazil. Girls assume a prominent role among the victims of violence. Among them, there is a higher prevalence of self-inflicted, sexual and psychological violence, as well as for female aggressors, suspected of alcohol use and aggressors with paternal bonds. Girls were more affected by agents of aggression, poisoning/intoxication and threats.

Among boys, there is a higher prevalence of physical violence, child labor and neglect/abandonment. They were most frequently assaulted by adolescents and people with maternal bonds and by the agents of aggression: bodily force/beating, hanging, blunt object, hot substance/object and firearm.

Violence against girls differs from violence against boys, with particular characteristics for the type of violence, profile of the aggressor and agents of aggression, requiring different measures to prevent violence in adolescence.

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