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Research on dating violence has tended to focus on North American college students. This study innovates with data collected in Switzerland from a sample of 132 school pupils and vocational education students aged 14 to 22 using a self-administered questionnaire. The study investigates relationships between attitudes and experiences about dating violence and the effect of gender. Biases against women were common in the sample. Females reported less endorsement of patriarchal attitudes about women's roles, but both genders reported similar levels of disparagement of women. Participants reported high rates of physical violence perpetration (41.9 percent) and victimization (48.8 percent). Pro-violence attitudes were related to psychological and physical perpetration as well as physical victimization. For female respondents, essentialist beliefs about women's innate abilities appear more persistent than beliefs about appropriate roles. Male participants endorsed both types of gender stereotypes at high rates. Male-perpetrated violence was perceived less favorably than female-perpetrated violence. Our data suggest that general attitudes toward violence are the most consistent predictor of physical and psychological aggression within dating relationships. More attention needs to be paid to subtypes among attitudes on women and violence, which past research assumed were monolithic. This study shows the need for prevention programs to address pro-violence attitudes.

Teen dating violence is increasingly recognized as a serious problem affecting many adolescents (Black et al. 2011; Hamby, Finkelhor, and Turner 2012) , but has received less attention outside of North America, with a particular lack of information on younger teens and the non-college population. Evidence is needed to document the extent of this public health problem in societies outside of North America. Attitudes and experiences relating to teen dating violence may differ in other sociocultural contexts. There is a need for more scientific evidence on this problem in countries outside North America, in order to contribute to awareness and shape prevention efforts. Attitudes, in the form of gender role stereotypes and concerning the acceptability of violence in relationships, are among the most commonly studied risk factors for teen dating violence (Foshee et al. 2000; Foshee et al. 1998; Simon et al. 2010). Few studies, however, have examined variations in types of attitudes and types of violence. Instead, negative attitudes toward women and favorable attitudes toward violence are usually assumed to be unitary constructs.

This study presents and analyzes the first data on dating violence attitudes and experiences among adolescents in French-speaking Switzerland. Existing data indicate that dating violence is common in Switzerland, as it is in most parts of the world (Chan et al. 2008), but there has been little research among younger adolescents and non-college students. In this respect, it is especially relevant in Switzerland to include students in vocational education and training, where about two-thirds of young people start this type of education in their early teens after basic schooling. Early adolescence is a prime risk period for the onset of teen dating violence and it is important, especially for prevention efforts, to know patterns of teen dating violence and identify risk factors that can be targeted by prevention and intervention programs. The data from our study have several unique characteristics. In addition to being, as far as we are aware, the first study of teen dating violence in Switzerland, it is also one of the first European studies to focus on vocational students (in contrast to university students). In addition to physical aggression these data also examine

psychological aggression, and include three categories of attitude: toward gender role egalitarianism, disparagement of women and teen dating violence.

1. Background

1.1. Intimate Partner Violence and Dating Violence in Switzerland

A recent study of college students in Switzerland reported high prevalence rates of dating violence. Over 28 percent of males and 23 percent of females reported having perpetrated assaults, while a smaller percentage, 25.0 percent of males and 16.6 percent of females, reported having been a victim of violence (Chan et al. 2008). In that study, however, the mean age of the participants was relatively high, at 34.3 years of age, and it thus represents an even older sample than typically seen in U.S. college student surveys. The Swiss Optimus study found that among teenagers, sexual victimization was often perpetrated by dating partners or ex-partners, with 42 percent of victims reporting at least one incident of sexual contact victimization perpetrated by their partner or date (Averdijk, Müller-Johnson, and Eisner 2011). In a nationally representative study of adult Swiss women, those aged 18–24 were at the greatest risk (26 percent) of being victims of violence (Killias, Simonin, and De Puy 2005). Given the higher rates of violence among the young adult population, and recent data on the extent of sexual violence among teenagers, we anticipate that physical and psychological forms of dating violence are also prevalent among Swiss adolescents.

1.2. Attitudes Associated with Dating Violence

Favorable attitudes about violence have long been thought to be important antecedents to violent acts (DeWall, Anderson, and Bushman 2011) and have long been a primary focus of research on teen dating violence (Foshee et al. 1998). Two types of attitudes have received particular attention in research on teen dating violence: the extent to which youth endorse gender stereotypes and the extent to which they endorse dating violence under particular circumstances (Foshee et al. 1998; Simon et al. 2010). Despite the decades-long social movement promoting egalitarian attitudes about men and women, gender hostility (men having negative attitudes about women and vice versa) remains common. Nearly 50 percent of men and 60 percent of women in a multi-national college sample showed some degree of gender hostility, with 5 percent of men and 7 percent of women exhibiting extreme hostility (Dutton, Straus, and Medeiros 2006). Although trending down historically, favorable attitudes towards at least certain forms of violence remain common. It has also been noted that floor effects are common in certain attitude measures. For example, one research team evaluating a sexual assault prevention program found that most college students rejected most rape myths at pretest (Klaw et al. 2012). Yet they also noted that a couple of items on their rape myth scale were still endorsed at distressingly high rates. Even after the prevention program, 50 percent of male participants endorsed the statement that: "Men don't usually intend to force sex on a woman, but sometimes they get too sexually carried away." They note that a more specific approach to problematic attitudes may be warranted. Similarly, Simon and colleagues (2010) found that girls in general, as well as youth who had dated, were less accepting of male-perpetrated than female-perpetrated physical violence. Although most research still unfortunately sums all attitudes into a single score, these data suggest that attention to variation across attitudes is warranted and ought to be investigated in a teenage population. For instance, it is often assumed that younger generations will have more egalitarian attitudes about gender than their parents, because of progress in the status of women at the level of society. In Switzerland, equality between men and women was included in the Federal Constitution in 1995 and there have been particular efforts to promote egalitarian norms in the public education system. Similarly, the first campaign on intimate partner violence against women in Switzerland was launched in 1997 following the publication of the first scientific study on the problem (Gillioz, De Puy, and Ducret 1997). Since that ground-breaking study, multiple Swiss institutions and organizations have developed prevention programs.

1.3. Sociodemographic Characteristics and Teen Dating Violence

In U.S. samples, a number of sociodemographic characteristics have been found to increase the risk of teen dating violence and other forms of youth victimization. Teen dating violence increases with age as youth move through adolescence (Turner et al. 2013). Children who live in single-parent or other nontraditional households are also at

elevated risk for most forms of youth victimization (Turner et al. 2013). Peer networks are increasingly recognized as an important risk factor (Swartout 2013), but less is known about how exposure to peer victims is associated with teen dating victimization and perpetration. Few of these factors have received extensive study outside the United States.

1.4. Purpose of the Study

Our first purpose was to assess patterns of gender stereotypes, favorable attitudes towards violence, and rates of teen dating violence perpetration and victimization in a sample of Swiss adolescents. This is not a randomly selected sample, and is not statistically representative of the whole teenage Swiss population: we were interested in identifying patterns that could indicate potential targets of future research and intervention. We also explored variations in attitudes about gender and violence and examined how these intersect with gender. Finally, we examined how attitudes, sociodemographic indicators, and relational characteristics are associated with teen dating violence perpetration and victimization in this Swiss sample. We expected higher levels of patriarchal and pro-violent attitudes to be associated with higher levels of involvement in teen dating violence.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

The study surveyed 132 teenagers, 42 percent of whom were girls and 58 percent boys. The study was conducted in French-speaking Swiss towns, in several youth centers and one vocational education program. Participants ranged from 14 to 22 years in age with a mean of 17.75 years (SD 1.63). One- quarter (25.0 percent) of the sample were 14 to 16 years old, 19.5 percent were 17, 27.3 percent were 18, 15.6 percent were 19, and 12 percent were 20 to 22 years old. A majority of the participants (75.0 percent) reported having been in at least one dating relationship lasting a month or longer. A majority (61 percent) described themselves as Swiss citizens, although most of the non-Swiss teens reported having lived in Switzerland for a long period of time (mean=10.9 years, SD=5.4). When asked with whom they lived, 87 percent of participants reported living with their mother, while only 60 percent lived with their father (53 percent lived with both). Families were relatively small, with participants living with a mean of 1.4 siblings (SD=1.2). The sample was drawn predominantly from working class families. When asked to indicate their parents' education levels, the most common response was vocational education and training diplomas (48.7 percent of fathers and 35.6 percent of mothers). More than one fifth indicated that the highest level of education that their parents had completed was the middle school level (22.6 percent of fathers and 27.1 percent of mothers). Only 7 percent of both mothers and fathers had received education at the university level.

2.2. Procedure

Data were collected in French-speaking Switzerland at one vocational education center and two community youth centers. The questionnaire for this study was administered as part of a pilot study in preparation for an evaluation of the SEESR program.[1] The organizations offered the SEESR program (including participation in this study) as one of their activities. Following the usual procedure, documentation was sent to parents describing all of the center's activities, including the SEESR prevention program, and parents signed a permission form allowing their children to participate in the various activities and fill in the questionnaire anonymously. The form provided the option for parents to refuse permission for their children to engage in any specific activity on the list. The consent of the participants themselves was obtained at the beginning of the program by center staff. Data analyzed in this article were collected at the beginning of the first session, prior to the presentation of any prevention programming.

2.3. Measures

2.3.1. Egalitarian Social Norms

The questionnaire included ten questions about social norms, adapted from the First Swiss national survey on partner violence (Gillioz, De Puy, and Ducret 1997). The

1 Sortir Ensemble et Se Respecter is a nine-session program promoting healthy relationships and dating violence prevention among adolescents (De Puy, Monnier, and Hamby 2009), adapted from Safe Dates (Foshee and Langwick 1994).

ten items were presented as statements. Participants were given both verbal and visual response categories. This format was suggested by program facilitators and pre-test participants, in order to make it easier to understand and user-friendly. Two happy faces were described as "strongly agree," one happy face represented "agree," one sad face signified "disagree," and two sad faces indicated "strongly disagree." See Table 1 for a description of items.

In the original Swiss survey (Gillioz, De Puy, and Ducret 1997), these questions were analyzed at the item level. For data reduction purposes, a principal factors analysis with a promax rotation was conducted on these items. Two factors accounted for 36 percent of the variance, each with four items with loadings of .3 or higher. Two items were dropped because they did not load on either factor. One factor was endorsement of patriarchal attitudes, which included "It is good when men participate in housework." Such statements phrased in egalitarian terms were reverse-coded. The second factor was disparagement of females, as indicated by negative opinions about women's personal characteristics, and included the item "Women are by nature less talented at math than men." Items were summed to create two scores, with higher scores indicating more attitudes of gender hostility. Internal consistency was adequate for patriarchal attitudes (.62) and fair for disparagement of females (.48).

2.3.2. Attitudes towards Dating Violence

Eight items from the original Safe Dates evaluation (Foshee et al. 1998) were translated and back-translated by the authors. One example is: "It is OK for a boy to hit his girlfriend if she insulted him in front of his friends." Other items are listed in Table 1. Participants were given response options of strongly agree, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat, or strongly disagree, represented pictorially as described above. We coded following the same procedure as Foshee and colleagues, totaling all items to obtain an overall score of dating violence attitudes, with higher scores indicating more pro-violent attitudes. Cronbach's Alpha was .77.

2.3.3. Dating Violence: Perpetration and Victimization

The survey included eighteen questions from the Revised Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS2) (Straus et al. 1996). Statements examining dating negotiation included items such as "I showed my partner I cared even though we disagreed." Dating negotiation items were used only to facilitate disclosure and were not included in analyses. Statements of dating violence assessed a range from verbal insults ("My partner called me fat or ugly") to physical assault ("I threw something at my partner that could hurt"). The CTS2 has shown good internal consistency and construct validity in a number of studies (Straus, Hamby, and Warren 2003). All eighteen items asked how many times the event had occurred within the past twelve months as well as whether it had ever happened earlier. They were combined into a single lifetime score. These questions were only asked of respondents who reported having a dating history (n=86). Items were grouped into four scores: psychological perpetration, psychological victimization, physical assault perpetration, and physical assault victimization. Internal consistency was adequate, at .68 for both psychological perpetration and victimization, .76 for physical perpetration, and .77 for physical victimization.

2.3.4. Demographics

We asked seven demographic questions, including age, gender, country of origin, and length of residency in Switzerland. Participants were asked to indicate whether they were currently in a relationship, and if not, whether or not they had ever been in a relationship. Those who had been or were currently in a relationship were asked the length of the relationship. Two questions asked about the level of education completed by both the mother and father, with seven possible responses ranging from primary school to university.

2.3.5. Father in Home

Family structure was assessed by asking participants to indicate the members of their household. For the analyses we created a variable for presence of the father in the home. Two out of five participants (40 percent) did not live with their father.

2.3.6 Know Female Victims of Teen Dating Violence

Participants were asked to indicate how many victims of teen dating violence they knew personally among friends and family. More than half (55 percent) reported knowing at least one victim.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive Statistics for Attitudes about Gender Roles and Teen Dating Violence

Descriptive analyses indicated that endorsement of patriarchal attitudes was fairly common, with 40.8 percent saying, for example, that it is better if a woman stays home. As can be seen in Table 1, chi-square analyses indicate significant gender differences for every item about patriarchal attitudes, with boys agreeing with patriarchal attitudes more often than girls. Endorsement of patriarchal attitudes did not, however, vary in connection with the presence or absence of a father in the home.

Endorsement of disparaging beliefs about women's personal characteristics was also fairly common, with more than half of the sample (53.5 percent) agreeing that "women are more easily influenced than men" and more one in four agreeing with statements that "a woman without children is unfulfilled" (28.9 percent) and "women are less talented at math than men" (25.6 percent). More than one in ten (11.5 percent) even agreed to the statement that a "wife must submit to sex with her husband." As also seen in Table 1, these attitudes did not vary significantly by gender. However, it was surprising that boys agreed with the statement that "males and females are equally courageous" more often than girls. For the most part, responses did not vary by family structure either, although respondents with no father in the home were somewhat more likely than those with a father in the home to endorse the statement that a wife must submit to sex with her husband (17 percent versus 6.6 percent, $p < .08$).

Table 1: Attitudes about Gender Roles and Teen Dating Violence

Item	Total (n=132)	Gender: Female (n=52)	Gender: Male (n=71)	X^2
Endorsement of patriarchal attitudes				
Better if a woman stays home	40.8	26.0	50.7	7.43**
More women not needed in politics	27.9	17.6	34.3	4.12*
Wife should not have equal influence	15.5	5.8	20.0	5.04*
Men should not have to do housework	9.2	1.9	12.9	4.74*
Endorsement of disparaging beliefs about women's personal characteristics				
Women are more easily influenced than men	53.5	52.0	54.3	0.06
A woman without children is unfulfilled	28.9	34.7	23.9	1.65
Women are less talented at math than men	25.6	26.9	23.5	0.18
Wife must submit to sex by husband	11.5	9.6	14.3	0.60
Belief in male and female equality				
Males and females are equally courageous	33.3	17.6	47.8	11.74***
Equal confidence in male and female surgeons	21.7	30.8	15.9	3.76†
Attitudes about justifications for dating violence				
Okay in retaliation if boyfriend hits first	40.8	42.3	43.5	0.02
Boyfriends deserve to be hit sometimes	21.4	21.2	20.0	0.02
Okay if girlfriend makes boyfriend jealous	11.5	3.8	18.6	6.00*
Girlfriends deserve to be hit sometimes	8.4	1.9	14.3	5.56*
Okay if girlfriend insults boyfriend	6.1	1.9	10.0	3.18†
Okay if boyfriend needs to get control	3.9	3.8	4.3	0.02
Okay if girlfriend annoys boyfriend	1.5	0.0	2.9	1.51
Okay in retaliation if girlfriend hits first[a]	22.1	19.2	25.7	0.71

†$p < .08$; *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$. n = 132 except for analyses by gender for which n = 123.
[a]This item double-loaded on both factors and was omitted from further analysis.

Many respondents also endorsed justifications for dating violence, including more than two out of five (40.8 percent) agreeing that it was okay for a girlfriend to hit her boyfriend in retaliation. More than one out of five (22.1 percent) said it was okay for a boyfriend to hit a girlfriend in retaliation. Gender differences were observed for the items about girlfriends making boyfriends jealous, girls deserving to be hit sometimes, and (in a statistical trend), girlfriends insulting their boyfriends, all of which were considered acceptable justifications for violence by more boys than girls (see Table 1). Family structure influenced attitudes about items relating to retaliation, which were both endorsed more frequently by respondents with no father in the home than by those who lived with their father.

3.2. Attitudes, Sociodemographic Characteristics, and Teen Dating Violence

We next examined how these attitudes contribute to actual perpetration and victimization. Four logistic regression analyses were conducted, with perpetration and victimization of physical assault and perpetration and victimization of psychological aggression as the dependent outcome variables. Gender, age, and presence of father in the home were demographic independent variables. We also included length of most recent relationship and personal knowledge of female victims of teen dating violence. Attitudes toward teen dating violence, patriarchal attitudes, and female disparagement were also entered as independent variables. These analyses are limited to the 71 percent of respondents who had been in at least one dating relationship. Bivariate correlations among these variables are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Intercorrelations among variables used in regressions

	1. Psychological aggression perpetration	2. Psychological aggression victimization	3. Physical assault perpetration	4. Physical assault victimization	5. Relationship length	6. Gender	7. Age	8. Live with father	9. Knows female victims of teen dating violence	10. Gender role attitudes	11. Female disparagement	12. Dating violence attitudes
1. Psychological aggression perpetration	1	.602**	.555**	.451**	.209	-.284**	.102	-.221*	.152	-.125	-.110	.105
2. Psychological aggression victimization	.602**	1	.302**	.390**	.176	-.310**	.071	-.106	.047	-.076	-.084	.006
3. Physical assault perpetration	.555**	.302**	1	.680**	.193	-.161	.144	-.248*	.087	.024	-.076	.141
4. Physical assault victimization	.451**	.390**	.680**	1	.086	.017	.142	-.115	.101	.025	-.058	.196
5. Relationship length	.209	.176	.193	.086	1	-.212	.150	.066	-.011	-.025	-.152	-.128
6. Gender	-.284**	-.310**	-.161	.017	-.212	1	.076	.178	.091	.332**	-.074	.228*
7. Age	.102	.071	.144	.142	.150	.076	1	.148	-.047	-.002	.075	-.089
8. Live with father	-.221*	-.106	-.248*	-.115	.066	.178	.148	1	-.105	.071	-.172	-.201
9. Knows female victims of teen dating violence	.152	.047	.087	.101	-.011	.091	-.047	-.105	1	.096	-.120	.002
10. Gender role attitudes	-.125	-.076	.024	.025	-.025	.332**	-.002	.071	.096	1	.228*	.182
11. Female disparagement	-.110	-.084	-.076	-.058	-.152	-.074	.075	-.172	-.120	.228*	1	.373**
12. Dating violence attitudes	.105	.006	.141	.196	-.128	.228*	-.089	-.201	.002	.182	.373**	1

Table 3: Attitudinal and demographic predictors of physical and psychological teen dating violence

	Physical assault						Psychological aggression					
	Perpetration			Victimization			Perpetration			Victimization		
Predictor	*B*	OR	95% CE	*B*	OR	95% CE	*B*	OR	95% CE	*B*	OR	95% CE
Relationship length	0.04	1.04	(.99–1.09)	0.02	1.02	(.98–1.07)	0.08†	1.08	(1.00–1.17)	0.03	1.03	(.96–1.11)
Gender	–1.06†	0.35	(.10–1.22)	–0.25	0.78	(.25–2.44)	**–1.85***	**0.16**	**(.03-.73)**	**–1.93***	**0.15**	**(.03-.72)**
Age	0.32	1.37	(.14–1.37)	0.26	1.30	(.87–1.94)	0.52†	1.69	(1.00–2.85)	**0.70***	**2.00**	**(1.16–3.47)**
Father in home	–1.14†	0.32	(.10–1.04)	–0.48	0.62	(.21–1.84)	–1.08	0.34	(.08–1.39)	–0.76	0.47	(.12–1.86)
Know female TDV victim	0.07	1.07	(.82–1.39)	0.05	1.05	(.81–1.37)	0.27	1.31	(.83–2.05)	–0.10	0.91	(.68–1.23)
Female disparagement	–0.22	0.80	(.59–1.08)	–0.12	0.88	(.67–1.17)	**–0.41***	**0.66**	**(.45-.98)**	**–0.50***	**0.61**	**(.40-.92)**
Patriarchal attitudes	0.14	1.15	(.88–1.51)	0.08	1.08	(.84–1.40)	0.08	1.09	(.77–1.53)	0.17	1.19	(.87–1.64)
Violence attitudes	**0.07***	**1.18**	**(1.01–1.39)**	**0.17***	**1.18**	**(1.01–1.37)**	**0.32****	**1.38**	**(1.11–1.72)**	0.16	1.17	(.97–1.41)

Notes: n = 86 for participants who have been in a dating relationship. For attitude items, higher scores indicate greater endorsement of attitude.
Gender dummy-coded: female = 1, male = 2. *** $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; † $p < .10$.

For both physical assault perpetration and victimization, only endorsement of pro-violence attitudes about dating violence was significantly associated with increased likelihood of occurrence. Being female and having an absent father both approached, but did not meet, statistical significance for perpetration of dating violence (not victimization). Pro-violent attitudes were associated with increased likelihood of psychological aggression perpetration. Female participants also reported higher rates of both psychological perpetration and victimization, although this could be a reporting artifact. Older participants reported greater vulnerability to psychological aggression. Counter to hypothesis, female disparagement was associated with lower rates of psychological perpetration and victimization (see Table 3).

4. Discussion

The key findings of this study are: 1) surprisingly high rates of bias against women and pro-violent attitudes, compared to other Swiss studies; 2) the identification of pro-violent attitudes as the most consistent associate of risk for perpetration (physical and psychological) and vulnerability to victimization of a range of attitudinal, relational, and demographic characteristics; and 3) unexpectedly, female disparagement was associated with lower rates for psychological aggression perpetration and victimization.

The survey found strong biases against women, which encompassed not only social expectations such as staying home to raise children, but also perceived limitations such as less talent in math. We were surprised to observe that substantial proportions of the sample thought women should not work outside the home or become more involved in politics. The female participants endorsed some patriarchal values, with 26 percent agreeing that it is better if women stay at home while men work. Among female participants, 5.8 percent agreed that men need not participate in housework, 17.6 percent thought more women are not needed in politics, and about one in six (15.5 percent) asserted that wives should not have equal influence in the home. For each of these items, male respondents endorsed the patriarchal position more strongly than females. Thus, while there are some indicators of movement towards more egalitarian norms, there is also evidence of persistent patriarchal attitudes, as is also the case in the United States (Foshee et al. 1998).

We found strong endorsement of disparaging attitudes towards women among female respondents. Almost one in ten (9.6 percent) agreed that a wife must submit to sex with her husband, while 34.7 percent agreed with the statement that a woman without children is unfulfilled.

Our sample reported rates of dating violence acceptance similar to those found in a 2010 study of American sixth-grade students (Simon et al. 2010). In both the American sample and our Swiss sample, girls were significantly less accepting of male-perpetrated violence while gender had no significant effect on acceptance of female-perpetrated violence. Both studies also found that youth who had never dated were significantly less accepting of female-perpetrated dating violence. Our results diverged from the American sample with regard to the significance of the effect of dating history on acceptance of male-perpetrated violence. In our sample, youth who had dated and youth who had never dated were similarly accepting of male-perpetrated violence, while in the American sample respondents with a dating history were significantly more accepting of male perpetration than those who had never dated (Simon et al. 2010).

4.1. The Connection between Attitudes and Behavior

We next examined reports of dating violence behaviors for the subset (71 percent) who had been involved in at least one dating relationship. More than two thirds of the sample reported being either a perpetrator (66.3 percent) or a victim (69.8 percent) of psychological aggression. Fewer indicated that they had either inflicted (41.9 percent) or endured (48.8 percent) physical assault, although both values are high. These rates are higher than found in college student samples in Switzerland (Chan et al. 2008; Straus 2008) and are at the high end of rates in North American adolescent samples (Reeves and Orpinas 2011). Our respondents reported committing and experiencing violence in greater numbers than they reported tolerance of violent behaviors.

Nonetheless, we did find that attitudes were significantly associated with violence, especially endorsement of rationalizations and justifications for using violence against a dating partner. We did not expect that high levels of disparagement would be associated with lower rates of violence, but that is what the data suggest. Future research is needed to see if such findings replicate, and if so, why disparagement of women relates to lower rates of violence. One possible explanation might be provided by recent social network analyses of bullying that suggests, contrary to some portrayals, that youth are more likely to bully those of similar social status (Faris and Felmlee 2011).

4.2. Limitations

This study was limited in several respects, due in part to it being the first research of its kind with a Swiss population. The study would have been strengthened by larger sample sizes, particularly since a significant portion of this young age group had never been in a dating relationship. Since our sample is not representative, it is unknown whether our findings can be generalized to other teenage populations. In a trade-off for making the survey of manageable length for a young population, we were limited in the different types of attitudes assessed. We experienced floor effects on the item level in our analyses, particularly with reports of male-perpetrated violence. The original Safe Dates scale was not balanced in terms of attitudes toward male and female perpetration, with six items on male perpetration and only two on female perpetration. We have recently become aware of an adaptation that provides gender balance in the items and would be worth considering for future research (Reeves and Orpinas 2011). Adding items addressing more socially acceptable acts might reveal a clearer picture of actual experiences. Our data showed a majority of respondents rejecting dating violence justifications, yet reporting higher levels of experience of dating violence than we expected. It is important for clinical providers to be aware of this disconnect and to not rely solely on breaking down justifications as a means of reducing dating violence.

4.3. Implications

Our findings suggest that general attitudes toward violence are a more consistent predictor of physical and psychological aggression within dating relationships than attitudinal factors. This has implications for the large body of research that often examines only gender-based attitudes without considering other risk factors that might be better predictors.

Our findings support the need for dating violence prevention among the adolescent population in Switzerland, including evaluations of the effects of such programs. The evaluations need to take into account the practical aspects

of gathering the data, including getting the subject population to cooperate in filling out the questionnaires. Our data suggest that attitudes about violence may be more proximally related to actual violence than attitudes regarding women and gender roles. The U.S. Expect Respect Dating Violence Prevention Program is tailored to at-risk youth and provides one useful model for ways to address at-risk Swiss youth with pro-violent attitudes. In addition to a school-wide prevention program and anti-violence youth leadership training, Expect Respect places at-risk students in support groups to provide a healthy social network and peer group (Ball, Kerig, and Rosenbluth 2009). The Swiss SEESR program has already been successfully introduced at several institutions in French-speaking Switzerland, and its training program for facilitators is currently undergoing an evaluation by the Fondation Charlotte Olivier, with the support of the Optimus Foundation (Minore and Hofner 2013). The feasibility of introducing this program on a larger scale is also being evaluated.

Our results indicate that other individual characteristics warrant attention in prevention programming. Our findings confirm substantial gender differences in certain attitudes about violence, and attitudes about inherent differences between men and women (Simon et al. 2010; Straus 2008). More study of the intersections between gender, attitudes, and violence is warranted. A recent review of eight sexual assault prevention programs in American universities (Vladutiu, Martin, and Macy 2011) supports the idea that effective programs are those aimed at single-gender audiences. The influence of dating history should be a special consideration for adolescent prevention programs, a notion that has been supported by the findings of previous studies (Reeves and Orpinas 2011; Simon et al. 2010). All of these studies have found that adolescents tend to become more accepting of dating violence once they have been in a dating relationship.

Our results also indicate the need to pay more nuanced attention to differences across specific attitudes. Person-centered analyses, such as latent class analysis, that enable the examination of subgroups might be useful in future research with larger samples. Future research could also explore whether other items might better capture the specific attitudes of youth. Among female adolescents, we found that essentialist beliefs about women's innate abilities (or lack thereof) appear to be more persistent than beliefs about women's appropriate roles. Male adolescents continued to endorse both types of gender stereotypes at high rates. We also found, for both males and females, that male-perpetrated violence was perceived less favorably than female-perpetrated violence. In this sample, these attitudes interacted in complex ways with violent behavior. Despite this complexity, focusing on attitudes that are still endorsed at high rates may be a means to more accurately assess true attitudes about violence with less influence of social desirability. This may be useful both in terms of measurement and ability to detect change in prevention programs (Klaw et al. 2012) as well as for targeting the areas that are most in need of change in order to reduce future violent incidents.

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