

# Mental Health and Power Dynamics in LGBTIQ+ Relationships: A Systematic Review of Experiences of Violence

Salud mental y dinámicas de poder en relaciones LGBTIQ+: Una revisión sistemática sobre experiencias de violencia

Anahy Gallego-Mendoza<sup>1a</sup>, Vanessa Casanova-Duarte<sup>2a</sup>, Paola Orduz-Hernández<sup>3</sup>, Beatriz-Milagros Mendoza-Rincón<sup>4a</sup>, Sandra-Milena Carrillo-Sierra<sup>5a</sup>, Olga Mariela Mogollón Canal<sup>6b</sup>, Astrid Rozo-Sánchez<sup>7b</sup>, Julio César Contreras-Velásquez<sup>8c</sup>, Valmore Bermúdez<sup>9d</sup>, Diego Rivera-Porras<sup>10c\*</sup>

## SUMMARY

**Introduction:** This systematic review analyzed data on intimate partner violence in the LGBTIQ+ community, focusing on prevalence, risk factors, and consequences. **Method:** Forty-seven studies were identified that highlighted the prevalence and characteristics of violence in LGBTIQ+ relationships, especially the vulnerability of lesbian and bisexual women. **Results:** Risk factors such as substance use, adverse family environments, discrimination, and sexual orientation-related stress were identified. **Conclusions:** There was a tendency to minimize and deny intimate partner violence within the LGBTIQ+

community due to multiple factors such as self-esteem, economic stability, and dependency, among others.

**Keywords:** Violence, intimate partner violence, intimate partner relationships.

## RESUMEN

**Introducción:** Esta revisión sistemática analizó los datos sobre la violencia de pareja en la comunidad LGBTIQ+ centrándose en la prevalencia, los factores de riesgo y las consecuencias. **Método:** Se identificaron 47 estudios que destacaban la prevalencia

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ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-6190-8935><sup>1</sup>  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-9227-2315><sup>2</sup>  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-3731-7368><sup>3</sup>  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0450-0267><sup>4</sup>  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9848-2367><sup>5</sup>  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9546-3435><sup>6</sup>  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3286-7632><sup>7</sup>  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5179-5400><sup>8</sup>  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1880-8887><sup>9</sup>  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2169-3208><sup>10\*</sup>

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<sup>a</sup> Universidad Simón Bolívar, Facultad de Ciencias Jurídicas y Sociales, Centro de Investigación en Estudios Fronterizos, Cúcuta, Colombia.

<sup>b</sup> Universidad de Pamplona, Facultad de Salud, Pamplona, Colombia.

<sup>c</sup> Universidad de la Costa, Departamento de Productividad e Innovación, Barranquilla, Atlántico, Colombia.

<sup>d</sup> Universidad Simón Bolívar, Facultad de Ciencias de la Salud, Centro de Investigaciones en Ciencias de la Vida, Barranquilla, Colombia.

\*Author of Correspondence: Diego Rivera-Porras, Universidad de la Costa, Departamento de Productividad e Innovación, Barranquilla, Atlántico, Colombia; E-mail: [drivera23@cuc.edu.co](mailto:drivera23@cuc.edu.co)

*y las características de la violencia en las relaciones LGBTIQ+, especialmente la vulnerabilidad de las mujeres lesbianas y bisexuales. Resultados: Se identificaron factores de riesgo como el consumo de sustancias, los entornos familiares adversos, la discriminación y el estrés relacionado con la orientación sexual. Conclusiones: Existió una tendencia a minimizar y negar la violencia de pareja en la comunidad LGBTIQ+ debido a múltiples factores como la autoestima, la estabilidad económica, la dependencia, entre otros.*

**Palabras clave:** *Violencia; violencia de pareja; relaciones de pareja.*

## INTRODUCTION

For a long time, violence in intimate relationships within the LGBTIQ+ community has been underestimated and neglected, without receiving adequate attention. Despite its high prevalence and negative impacts on the mental health and well-being of those who suffer from it, this problem continues to be ignored, leaving victims without the recognition and support they deserve. The LGBTIQ+ community encompasses individuals with non-traditional gender identities and sexual orientations in society, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and other people who do not identify with the acronym. Intimate relationship violence within the LGBTIQ+ community has long been underestimated and marginalized and has not been given the necessary attention. Despite its high frequency and destructive effects on the mental health and well-being of those affected, this issue continues to be overlooked, depriving victims of the recognition and support they deserve. Violence in LGBTIQ+ intimate relationships manifests itself in a variety of ways that profoundly affect the lives of those who experience it (1). Firstly, physical violence, which includes direct aggressions such as hitting, pushing, and injuring, with serious consequences for the physical health of the victims (2). Sexual violence, secondly, encompasses unwanted behaviors such as coercion and rape, which presents additional challenges in detecting and addressing them in LGBTIQ+ relationships (3). Psychological violence, on the other hand,

includes insults, humiliation, and emotional control, being equally detrimental to the self-esteem and mental health of victims (4). Finally, economic violence may go unnoticed, but it has lasting consequences, as it involves financial abuse and control of resources that leave victims in a vulnerable situation (5).

Another important aspect is the prominent vulnerability of minorities and transgender people within the LGBTIQ+ community to various forms of violence, due to the higher levels of discrimination and marginalization they face in intimate relationships (6). The historical lack of inclusion of intimate partner violence in LGBTIQ+ relationships in conventional domestic violence frameworks has had serious consequences for those who experience this type of violence, as their unique experiences in abusive relationships are not recognized or understood, making it difficult to access specific resources and support (7). Often, health and social service professionals lack knowledge about LGBTIQ+ intimate partner violence, resulting in inadequate detection and inappropriate responses, and this lack of preparedness maintains the cycle of abuse and generates feelings of incomprehension and invisibility for the victims (8,9).

Likewise, fear of stigma and discrimination may discourage victims from seeking assistance (10). Discrimination and stigma can arise from family members, friends, co-workers, and even health and social service professionals (11). This can lead victims to feel isolated and unsupported, which can increase their vulnerability and complicate their recovery process (12). Finally, the scarcity of specific resources represents a significant barrier for LGBTIQ+ individuals experiencing intimate partner violence (13). It is important to note that existing programs and shelters often do not meet the necessary requirements for this community, which has led to discomfort and insecurity when seeking help (14). Additionally, the scarcity of funding and resources dedicated to addressing violence in LGBTIQ+ relationships makes it difficult to create and maintain specialized programs and shelters. Thus, the following review question arises: What are the violent behaviors and associated risk factors in LGBTIQ+ relationships?

(Table 1).

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The current study was conducted following the guidelines of the PRISMA statement endorsed by Page et al. (15), which is a guide that facilitates the systematic review of the scientific literature, from identifying databases to searching and selecting articles and their subsequent analysis. The AMCPT A (Adjective, Measurement, Condition, Population, Time) tool was used to formulate research questions, ensuring the topics' precision and conceptual clarity and facilitating more precise and better-quality searches (16)

### Research question

The research question posed was: What are the violent behaviors and associated risk factors in LGBTIQ+ relationships?

### Sources of information

The study utilized key terms extracted from the Descriptors in Health Sciences (DESC) and Medical Subject Headings (MESH) (Table 2).

Table 1. AMCPT.

Dimension	Description
A (Adjective)	What
M (Measurement)	Violent behaviors, risk factors
C (Condition)	LGBTIQ+ couples
P (Population)	Adults and adolescents
T (Time)	The last 25 years

Table 2. DESC and MESH Descriptors.

Term	DECS and MESH
Physical Violence	Physical Violence, Physical Abuse, Physical Maltreatment
Sexual Violence	Sexual Violence, Sexual Abuse, Sexual Assault, Sexual Offense
Substance Abuse	Substance Abuse, Alcohol Abuse, Alcohol Dependence, Alcohol Use Disorder, Drug Abuse
Intimate Partner Violence	Intimate Partner Violence, Dating Violence, Partner Abuse
Emotional/Psychological Abuse	Emotional Abuse, Psychological Abuse
LGBTIQ+	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Sexual and Gender Minority
Lesbian	Lesbian
Gay	Gay
Bisexual	Bisexual
Transgender	Transgender, Transsexualism, Gender Dysphoria
Intersex	Intersex
Queer	Queer
Asexual	Asexuality
Pansexual	Pansexual

### Search strategies

A search strategy was designed using databases and academic repositories. Search algorithms were developed with the terms found in DECS and MESH, using logical AND/OR operators and

symbols such as “” and () (Table 3). Information was collected from academic databases such as PubMed, SpringerLink, ScienceDirect, Scopus, and Taylor & Francis, as well as academic

repositories such as BVS (Virtual Health Library), BASE (Bielefeld Academic Search Engine), Dialnet, Redalyc, DOAJ (Directory of Open Access Journals), Springer Open, Sage

Table 3. Search Algorithm.

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1. ("Gay" OR "Homosexual") AND ("Emotional Abuse" OR "Emotional Maltreatment") AND ("Partner Abuse" OR "Intimate Partner Abuse")
  2. ("Gay" OR "Homosexual") AND ("Physical Maltreatment" OR "Physical Violence") AND ("Partner Abuse" OR "Intimate Partner Abuse")
  3. ("Gay" OR "Homosexual") AND ("Sexual Abuse" OR "Sexual Violence") AND ("Partner Abuse" OR "Intimate Partner Abuse")
  4. ("Gay" OR "Homosexual") AND ("Drug Abuse" OR "Substance Abuse") AND ("Partner Abuse" OR "Intimate Partner Abuse")
  5. ("Lesbian" OR "Lesbian Women") AND ("Alcohol Addiction" OR "Alcohol Dependence") AND ("Partner Abuse" OR "Intimate Partner")
  6. ("Lesbian" OR "Lesbian Women") AND ("Substance Abuse" OR "Drug Addiction") AND ("Partner Abuse" OR "Intimate Partner")
  7. ("Lesbian" OR "Lesbian Women") AND ("Sexual Abuse" OR "Sexual Assault") AND ("Partner Abuse" OR "Intimate Partner")
  8. ("Lesbian" OR "Lesbian Women") AND ("Family Violence" OR "Domestic Violence")
  9. ("Lesbian" OR "Lesbian Women") AND ("Psychological Violence" OR "Emotional Abuse")
  10. ("Bisexual" OR "LGBT") AND ("Sexual Assault" OR "Sexual Violence") AND ("Partner Abuse" OR "Intimate Partner")
  11. ("Bisexual" OR "LGBT") AND ("Psychological Harm" OR "Emotional Abuse") AND ("Partner Abuse" OR "Intimate Partner")
  12. ("Bisexual Women" OR "Bisexual Men") AND ("Assaultive Behavior" OR "Domestic Violence") AND ("Partner Abuse" OR "Intimate Partner")
  13. ("Bisexual" OR "LGBT") AND ("Substance Abuse") AND ("Partner Abuse" OR "Intimate Partner")
  14. ("Transsexual" OR "Transgender men") AND ("Physical Maltreatment" OR "Physical Violence") AND ("Partner Abuse" OR "Intimate Partner Abuse")
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Journal, APA PsycNet, Science Research, Oxford Academic, and Worldwide Science (Table 3).

### Characteristics of the studies

The review focused on research on violent behaviors in LGBTIQ+ adults and adolescents in intimate partner relationships, as well as on the characteristics and consequences of these behaviors. Factors such as age, history of violence, and psychological and emotional problems of the participants were analyzed.

### Selection and analysis

A first selection of studies followed the established inclusion criteria (Table 4), which considered the population studied, the research

type, and the publication year. Then, an Excel table designed by the authors was completed independently, detailing the key aspects of each selected study, following the guidelines of the PRISMA statement (Table 5).

### Methods used to assess the risk of bias in the included studies

To reduce bias in this systematic review, two teams were formed to search for materials following precise and specific inclusion criteria, which should accurately reflect the study design, the target population's characteristics, the research context, and the measurements used. Once the criteria were established, a thorough and systematic search of all relevant studies was

carried out to reduce the risk of publication bias. A critical analysis of the limitations of the included studies was also carried out to understand their

impact on the interpretation of the results. Finally, the context in which the studies were conducted was considered, considering the timing, location

Table 4. Inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Characteristic	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Study type	Quantitative and qualitative studies that analyze violent behaviors in LGBTIQ+ couples of adults and adolescents.	Opinion studies, editorials, narrative or systematic reviews, and single case studies.
Population	Adults and adolescents who identify as LGBTIQ+ and are in a couple relationship.	Studies that do not focus on LGBTIQ+ couples of adults and adolescents.
Phenomenon of interest	Violent behaviors, including physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence.	Studies that do not analyze violent behaviors in LGBTIQ+ couples.
Timeframe	Studies published in the last 25 years (from 1999 to the present).	Studies published before 1999.
Access to information	Open-access studies or those with full access are available through databases or libraries.	Restricted access studies that cannot be obtained through databases or libraries.

Table 5. Filter application.

Database	Total found	Type of document	Time period	No access	Revisions/incomplete texts/duplicates	Non-compliance with variable criteria	Total Sample
Dialnet	32	6	0	3	2	17	4
SCOPUS	3 003	164	0	2 029	79	725	6
BVS	1 699	98	0	587	317	697	0
BASE	2 041	426	0	969	65	581	0
SpringerLink	51 012	28 519	0	20 289	150	2 048	6
Taylor & Francis	29 105	9 121	0	18 860	240	877	7
ScienceDirect	12 908	6 401	0	2 903	24	3 575	5
World Wide Science	4 701	1 347	0	2 604	105	644	1
PubMed	439	108	0	229	9	85	8
Science Research	13 988	3 844	0	6 913	214	3 013	4
APA PsycNet	89	2	0	14	2	71	0
Sage Journal	2 639	21	0	2 414	24	176	4
Oxford academic	2 746	1 280	0	0	1 249	215	2
DOAJ	18	0	0	0	10	8	0
Total	124 420	51 337	0	57 814	2 490	12 732	47

and demographic characteristics of the population studied.

In total, 124 420 search results were found in all databases, of which 51 337 were not accessible,

57 814 did not meet the analysis criteria, and 2 490 were in review, incomplete, or duplicates. The final sample in all databases included 47 studies. In Dial-net, 32 results were identified, of which six were not accessible, two were in

review or incomplete, and 17 did not meet the analysis criteria, resulting in a final sample of 4 studies. Scopus yielded 3 003 results, of which 164 were not accessible, 2 029 did not meet the analysis criteria, and 725 were in review, incomplete or duplicated, with a final sample of 6 studies. In the case of BVS, 1 699 results were found, with 98 not accessible, 587 not meeting the analysis criteria, and 697 in review, incomplete, or duplicated, resulting in a final sample of 0 studies. In the BASE platform, 2041 results were identified, of which 426 were unavailable, 969 did not meet the analysis criteria, and 581 were in review, incomplete, or duplicated, resulting in a final sample of 0 studies.

In SpringerLink, a total of 51 012 search results were found, of which 28 519 were not accessible, 20 289 did not meet the analysis criteria, and 2048 were under review, incomplete, or duplicates. The final sample selected from SpringerLink was 6 studies. In the case of Taylor & Francis, 29 105 search results were reported, with 9 121 not accessible, 18 860 not meeting the analysis criteria, and 877 in review, incomplete, or duplicate, resulting in a final sample of 7 studies. Regarding ScienceDirect, 12 908 search results were obtained, of which 6 401 could not be accessed, 2 903 did not meet the analysis criteria, and 3 575 were in review, incomplete, or duplicated, with a final sample of 5 studies. In the case of Worldwide Science, 4 701 search results were found, of which 1 347 were unavailable, 2 604 did not meet the analysis criteria, and 644 were in review, incomplete, or duplicated, resulting in a final study included in the sample.

The PubMed search yielded a total of 439 results, of which 108 were unavailable, 229 did not meet the analysis criteria, and 85 were in review, incomplete, or duplicates. After this process, 8 studies were included in the final sample. As for Science Research, 13 988 results were identified, of which 3 844 were not available, 6 913 did not meet the analysis criteria, and 3 013 were in review, incomplete or duplicated, resulting in the inclusion of 4 studies in the final sample. On the other hand, APA PsycNet presented 89 results, with 2 inaccessible, 14 that did not meet the analysis criteria, and 71 in review, incomplete, or duplicated. However, none were included in the final sample. Sage Journal yielded 2 639

results, with 21 inaccessible, 2 414 not meeting the analysis criteria, and 176 in review, incomplete or duplicate, and four studies were selected for the final sample. In Oxford Academic, 2 746 results were found, with 1 280 inaccessible, none that did not meet the analysis criteria, and 1 249 in review, incomplete or duplicated, of which 2 studies were included in the final sample. In DOAJ, 18 results were obtained, none of which were inaccessible or did not meet the analysis criteria. However, 10 were in review, incomplete, or duplicate, excluding all DOAJ studies from the final sample.

Finally, this review was carried out in three phases: identification, selection, elimination, and inclusion of the PRISMA flowchart (Figure 1).

## RESULTS

This section presents the findings from the studies analyzed on violence in LGBTQ+ relationships, including its various forms and the risk factors involved. The results were structured in two tables (Tables 6 and 7). Table 6 details the classification of the different types of violence found, and Table 7 shows the risk factors, health conditions, and vulnerability characteristics related to a higher risk of experiencing violence.

### Description of Violent Behaviors

In Europe, a higher incidence of psychological violence was observed among lesbian women compared to homosexual men, with figures of 23.5 % (67 out of 285) and 21.2 % (73 out of 345), respectively (10). Regarding the most common violent behaviors in gay men, physical and sexual abuse stand out, including coercion to engage in sexual activities, suffering harm during sexual intercourse, lack of respect for established boundaries, rejection of safe sexual practices, and threats of sexual assault (10). Both lesbian women and gay men predominantly presented psychological violence, physical violence, socioeconomic violence, and sexual violence (32). Lesbians were found to be more likely to experience emotional and sexual violence, and the abuse motivated them to “be better” for their partners (21). Harmful



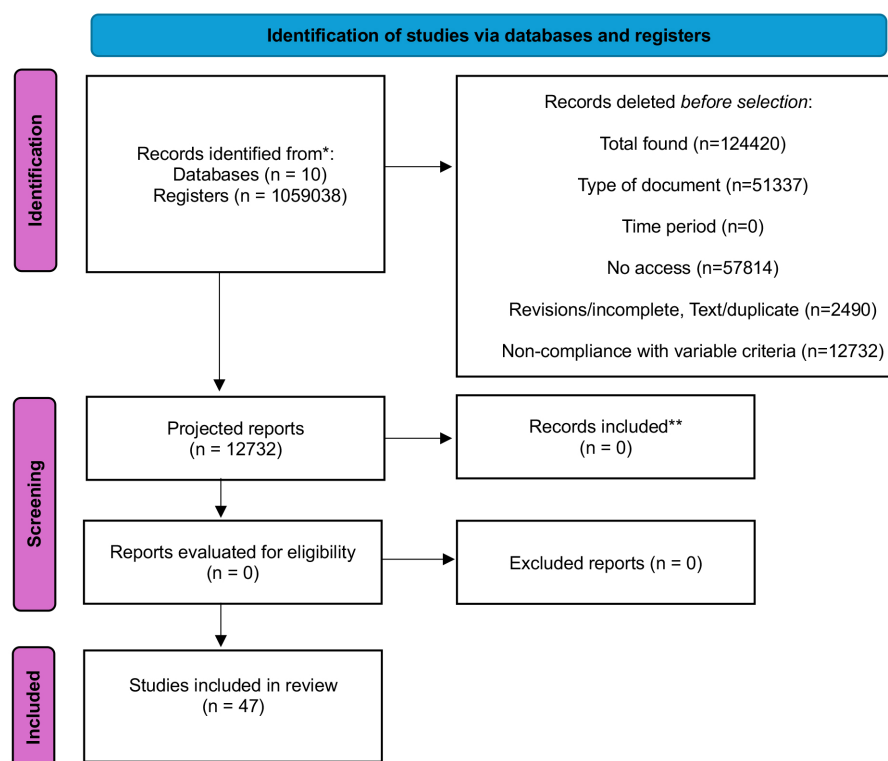


Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart.

gender stereotypes prevalent in society tend to perceive women as passive and nonviolent, which contributes to the ignorance of violence against these minorities (28). In the case of adolescents belonging to sexual minorities, it was observed that violence tends to be reciprocal and encompasses a wide range of violent behaviors (13).

In Asia, especially in China, it has been reported that 44.1 % of the population has experienced intimate partner violence at some point in their lives. There is a connection between physical violence in intimate relationships and risky sexual behaviors. Acts of physical violence and lack of consent can lead to situations that transgress boundaries in a sexual relationship, resulting in physical and psychological harm (38). From the above, it can be deduced that a common aspect between the two countries is society's perception of intimate partner violence among sexual minorities. In both China and Japan, there is a tendency to minimize this public health problem,

as is the case of intimate partner violence in the LGBTQ+ community, assuming that these types of situations are not common in their respective countries or that, if they occur, they are isolated incidents.

In the Americas, it was found that psychological violence in women manifests itself through control strategies, such as isolation of the victims from their support networks. According to Lopez and Ayala (22), this type of violence is commonly reported. On the other hand, factors in school environments were identified that could influence sexual violence experienced by homosexual/lesbian individuals (11). Other studies have revealed that 53.5 % of LGBTQ+ students have experienced emotional harm from their partners, compared to 42 % of the heterosexual population surveyed, with higher rates of physical and emotional violence. Both physical and emotional violence showed a higher prevalence of non-physical tactics, such as emotional abuse and pressure/limitation, in contrast to physical

Table 6. Description of Violent Behaviors.

Title	Authors	Year	Continent	Finding
Gay Men's Domestic Violence (12)	Mc Clennen, Summers, Vaughan	2002	América	In this research, 60.3 % of the participants who were surveyed indicated that the abuse got worse over time, while 38.1 % indicated that they perceived a pattern. One participant mentioned, "He treated me well again and took me out to dinner".
Puerto Rican drug users' experiences of physical and sexual abuse: Comparisons based on sexual identities (17)	Finlinson, et al.	2003	América	Homosexual men were four times more likely to experience physical violence from their partners company heterosexual men.
Prevalence of partner violence in same-sex romantic and sexual relationships in a national sample of adolescents (18)	Halpern, Young, Waller, Martin, Kupper	2004	América	About 25 % of adolescents with same-sex romantic or sexual partners reported experiencing some type of intimate partner, and about 10 % reported experiencing physical violence. Males were found to be less likely than females to report any violence.
Manifestations of domestic violence in a sample of Puerto Rican homosexual men and lesbian women (19)	Reyes Mena, Rodríguez, Malavé	2005	América	Their search found that physical violence in intimate partner relationships was more common and significant in lesbian women than in gay men. Some 28.4 % indicated that their partners were using alcohol or drugs when the physical violence occurred, while 16.2 % mentioned that they themselves were under the influence of substances at the time.
Intimate Partner Abuse among Gay and Bisexual Men: Risk Correlates and Health Outcomes (20)	Houston and Mc Kirman	2007	América	Twenty-one percent of respondents reported experiencing verbal abuse, which includes public humiliation or control. Those who were victims of this type of abuse were more likely to suffer from depression, other mental disorders, substance abuse, and obesity. 32.4 % of the respondents indicated having suffered partner violence in past or current relationships. About 21 % of all participants mentioned having experienced verbal abuse, while physical abuse was reported by 19.2 % and sexual abuse by 18.5 %.
Researching Domestic Violence in Same-Sex Relationships—A Feminist Epistemological Approach to Survey Development (21)	Hester and Donovan	2009	Europa	Lesbians are more likely to experience emotional and sexual abuse compared to other groups.
Intimacy and the multiple manifestations of domestic violence among lesbian women (22)	López and Ayala	2011	América	All the women mentioned having suffered both physical aggression (such as hair pulling slapping) and psychological aggression (such as manipulation and isolation), especially in situations involving alcohol consumption.
Dating Violence Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth (23)	Dank et al.	2014	América	Fifty-nine percent of LGB people experienced psychological abuse, while 37 % were perpetrators of this type of violence. In addition, the high vulnerability of transgender people psychological, sexual, and physical violence in dating and intimate relationships is highlighted. 23 % of LGB people experienced sexual coercion, while 4 % identified themselves as perpetrators of this behavior. The high vulnerability of transgender people psychological, sexual, and physical violence in dating and intimate relationship situations was so highlighted.
Filling the Silence: Exploring the Bisexual Experience of Intimate Partner Abuse (24)	Head and Milton	2014	Europa	Bisexual individuals often experience a "lack of recognition," which prevents them from identifying abusive partner behaviors and consequently makes it difficult to seek help. They abuse mentioned



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...continuation Table 6. Description of Violent Behaviors.

Title	Authors	Year	Continent	Finding
				by participants were like those reported by heterosexual individuals and members of the LGBT community, including constant criticism, threats, physical aggression, rape, and humiliation.
Gay men and intimate partner violence: a gender analysis (25)	Oliffe, et al.	2014	América	Partner violence initially manifested itself as verbal abuse, but most of those involved also suffered physical or sexual abuse. One 48-year-old individual described how the violence evolved in their relationship, starting with words, then moving to physical abuse, and finally losing all respect, which led to police intervention.
Receipt and Perpetration of Intimate Partner Violence and Condomless Anal Intercourse among gay and bisexual men in Atlanta (26)	Stephenson and Finneran	2017	América	46.1 % of respondents reported having experienced some form of intimate partner violence in the previous year a male partner. The most common form reported was emotional intimate partner violence (28.3 %), followed by physical/sexual violence (23.6 %) and monitoring intimate partner violence (21.6 %).
Mental health, sexual identity, and interpersonal violence: Findings from the Australian longitudinal Women's health study (27)	Szalacha, Hughes, McNair, Loxton	2017	Europa	Heterosexual and lesbian women were more likely to report severe physical abuse, and interpersonal violence was significantly related to poorer mental health in lesbian and bisexual women.
Sociodemographic characteristics of gay and lesbian victims of intimate partner psychological abuse in Spain and Latin America (10)	Barrientos, Escartín, Longares, Rodríguez-Carballeira	2018	Europa	The study analyzed the incidence of psychological abuse in same-sex relationships in Spain and Latin America through an online survey involving 663 homosexual individuals. Infeudate 10.6 % of respondents reported having been subjected to psychological abuse by their partners, with rate of 9.6 % in gay men and 10.7 % in lesbians. In the case of gay men, differences in age, employment status, and alcohol consumption were identified between those who were victims and those who were not. On the other hand, in the case of lesbians, significant discrepancies were observed in countries of origin and professional status. When comparing victims from both groups, differences were found in professional status and alcohol consumption.
A Study of Intimate Partner Violence, Substance Abuse, and Sexual Risk Behaviors Among Gay, Bisexual, and Other Men Who Have Sex with Men in a Sample of Geosocial-Networking Smartphone Application Users (8)	Duncan, et al.	2018	América	The incidence of victimization experiences in bisexual individuals by their partner varied by type, with 24 % (n=42) reporting having experienced emotional violence at some point in their lives.
Psychological abuse in Spanish same-sex couples: prevalence and relationship between victims and perpetrators (28)	Longares, Escartín, Barrientos, Rodríguez-Carballeira	2018	Europa	11.3 % of homosexual men identify themselves as habitual victims of psychological violence.
Patterns of childhood maltreatment and intimate partner violence, emotion dysregulation, and mental health symptoms among lesbian, gay, and bisexual emerging adults: A three-step latent class approach (29)	Charak, Villarreal, Schmitz, Hirai, Ford	2019	América	Among men who identify as homosexual, there is a notable 18.3 % like lophodont countering psychological harassment and cyberstalking in their relationships. The study identifies specific challenges faced by sexual minorities, such as a history of emotional maltreatment and neglect during childhood, affecting 19.3 % of bisexual women and 19.5 % of bisexual men. In terms of partner-related stalking and psychological abuse through technology, 32.7 % of bisexual women and 19.5 % of bisexual men were categorized as experiencing high levels of victimization. Their search also reveals that homosexual individuals are similarly vulnerable to emotional violence and controlling behaviors, with approximately 60 % to 70 % reporting instances of

Continued in pag. 574...

...continuation Table 6. Description of Violent Behaviors.

Title	Authors	Year	Continent	Finding
Invisibility is Not Invincibility: The Impact of Intimate Partner Violence in Gay, Bisexual, and Straight Men's Mental Health (30)	Dickerson-Amaya and Coston	2019	América	80% encountering controlling tactics within their relationships.  Bisexual men tend to experience emotional and controlling violence, with approximately 60 % - 70 % reporting emotional victimization, and between 70 % - 80 % reporting manipulative tactics. It is notably more common for bisexual men to consider their current mental health status to be poor. About 10% of all men, regardless of sexual orientation, experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, and 30% of all men report difficulty falling sleep.
Intimate partner violence, depression, and sexual behavior among gay, bisexual and other men who have sex with men in the PROUD trial (31)	Miltz, et al.	2019	Europa	The study analyzed the incidence of partner violence in intimate relationships, the correlations between socioeconomic and psychosocial factors with such violence, as well as the relationship between partner violence, depression and sexual behavior in gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men (MSM) who were part of the PROUD trial on preexposure prophylaxis (PrEP).
Violência na intimidade nos relacionamentos homossexuais gays e lésbicos (32)	Osório, Sani, Soeiro	2020	Europa	Lesbian women may face a higher incidence of physical, economic, and sexual violence, although it is important to avoid generalizations due to the diversity of the research population.
Sexual Partnership-Level Correlates of Intimate Partner Violence Among Men Who Have Sex with Men and Transgender Women in Lima (14)	Passaro et al.	2020	América	Physical violence has a higher incidence of 3.1 % in stable relationships of men who have sex with men (MSM). Interthread, 3.1 % (14/456) of MSM reported experiencing psychological violence by their partners. Sexual violence was the least frequent of intimate partner violence, affecting 0.4 % (2/456) of MSM.
Unique and Cumulative Effects of Intimate Partner Cyber victimization Types on Alcohol Use in Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Emerging Adults (33)	Trujillo, Cantu, Charak	2020	América	In the case of bisexual women, 77 cases (27.8 %, n=119) were recorded, while in bisexual men, 15 cases (5.4 %, n=41) of emotional violence were reported. Women showed a greater tendency to experience emotional violence compared to bisexual men, lesbians, and homosexuals.
The ALOHA Study: Intimate Partner Violence in Hawai'i's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community (34)	Wong, La, Lee, Raidoo	2020	América	167 participants (35.0 %) reported experiencing physical and sexual intimate partner violence. Respondents from the LGBT community in the ALOHA study were 5 to 10 times more likely to report physical and sexual violence compared to the general Hawaiian population.
Associations Between LGBTQ-Affirming School Climate and Intimate Partner Violence Victimization Among Adolescents (11)	Adams, et al.	2021	América	The figures for intimate partner violence in bisexual individuals are significantly higher, exceeding 16% for sexual. Couples that include individuals of the same sex, opposite sex, or both sexes are more likely to report intimate partner violence, both physical and sexual, compared to heterosexual youth. The rate of intimate partner violence is not abnormally higher among bisexual individuals, with more than 16% experiencing sexual violence and more than 45% being victims of physical violence. These figures can be explained by a variety of factors, such as stress related to being part of a minority.
Intimate Partner Violence and Controlling Behaviors Experienced by Emergency Department Patients:	Harland, Peek-Asa, Saftlas	2021	América	The purpose of the research was to determine the frequency of intimate partner violence in the LGBTIQ+ community in an emergency department. It was observed that women within this community

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...continuation Table 6. Description of Violent Behaviors.

Title	Authors	Year	Continent	Finding
Differences by Sexual Orientation and Gender Identification (35)				more likely to present for intimate partner violence compared to heterosexual women, particularly lesbians, with a 44 % risk.
Trauma-Informed Care and Health Among LGBTQ Intimate Partner Violence Survivors (36)	Scheer and Poteat	2021	América	Lesbian women account for 44 % of the cases of psychological violence in the community.
The Chicago Health and Life Experiences of Women Couples Study: Protocol for a Study of Stress, Hazardous Drinking, and Intimate Partner Aggression Among Sexual Minority Women and Their Partners (37)	Veldhuis et al.	2021	América	Abuse was categorized into four main forms: physical injury, verbal attacks including putdowns and insults, threats of physical violence, and shouting and cursing directed at victims. Lesbian or heterosexual women tend to experience physical abuse more frequently (78 % and 67 %, respectively).
Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence and Associated Factors Among Men Who Have Sex with Men in China (38)	Wei et al.	2021	Asia	35.5 % of participants reported having experienced violence in their intimate partner relationships, while 27.6 % identified themselves as aggressors.
Bidirectional IPV Among Adolescent Sexual Minorities (7)	Bosco, Robles, Stephenson, Starks	2022	Europa	In the previous year, 44 % of people in a relationship had experienced verbal partner violence in both directions, while 56 % had only experienced verbal violence in one direction (i.e., unidirectional verbal violence). Forty-six percent of sexual minority participants experienced psychological intimate partner violence.
Interpersonal Violence Experiences and Disclosure Patterns for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer+, and Heterosexual University Students (39)	Palmer, Williams, Mennicke	2022	América	LGBTQ+ students in this group showed higher levels of intimate partner violence and sexual assault. This implies a higher incidence of psychological and physical violence in intimate relationships, as well as a higher incidence of sexual violence related to coercion and lack of capacity to consent.
Experiences of Violence Against Lesbian and Bisexual Women in Brazil (40)	Rufino, Filho, Madeiro	2022	América	The incidence of psychological violence among lesbian and bisexual women analysis, finding that bisexual women reported a higher percentage (44.5 % vs. 32.8 %; $p = 0.021$ ). It was also observed that violence in public settings was higher in this group (59.5 % vs. 39.5 %; $p = 0.028$ ). A comparison was made between reports of psychological violence in lesbian and bisexual women, finding that bisexual women experienced a higher percentage compared to lesbians (44.5 % vs. 32.8 %; $p = 0.021$ ). Also, it was observed that violence received in public was higher in the group of bisexual women compared to lesbians (59.5 % vs. 39.5 %; $p = 0.028$ ).
Perceptions of Context of Intimate Partner Violence Among Young, Partnered Gay, Bisexual and Other Men Who Have Sex with Men in the United States (41)	Stephenson et al.	2022	América	In the study, it was found that emotional violence, characterized by using negative comments to undermine the self-confidence of the participants, was the most common type of violence in relationships analysis. This behavior focused mainly on the appearance or abilities of those involved. Interthread, controlling actions was the most frequently mentioned form of vi, manifesting itself through possessive attitudes motivated by jealousy, which led to limiting the couple's social interactions. These behaviors arose mostly from fear of the possible breakup of the relationship. The study found that emotionally violent behaviors, such as negative comments to undermine trust, were the most common in partner violence relationships. Participants also highlighted

*Continued in pag. 576...*

...continuation Table 6. Description of Violent Behaviors.

Title	Authors	Year	Continent	Finding
A Qualitative Study of Intimate Partner Violence Among Young Gay and Bisexual Men (42)	Stults et al.	2022	América	control as a common form of violence, with the intent to limit the partner's social interactions due to feelings of jealousy. These acts often stemmed from fear that the partner would end the relationship.  More than 50 % of respondents (n = 21) mentioned having suffered verbal abuse. A similar proportion of participants (n = 17) reported being pushed. Also, more than half of the participants (n = 16) reported being hit, slapped, or assaulted by their partner. In addition, several participants (n = 9) reported sexual experiences that they considered too rough or aggressive.
Discrimination and Intimate Partner Violence Victimization and Perpetration Among a Convenience Sample of LGBT Individuals in Latin America (43)	Swan et al.	2022	América	60.61 % of the respondents experienced at least one type of intimate partner violence victimization in their lifetime, while 56.57 % reported at least one form of perpetration of the types of violence in their lifetime. The most common form of victimization was psychological aggression, followed by physical aggression and sexual coercion. In terms of perpetration, psychological aggression was the most frequent. The relationship between physical violence victimization and heterosexism in work and school settings was significant. Both perpetration and victimization of physical violence, psychological violence, and sexual coercion were associated with the subscale of heterosexism labeled "other".
Disproportionately high: an exploration of prevalence rates of intimate partner violence for bisexual people (44)	Basting et al.	2024	América	Couples that included bisexual individuals showed higher scores on the abusive behavior questionnaire.

tactics (39). Discrimination and rejection toward sexual minorities pose significant risks due to the exclusion and marginalization they face, both from heteronormative society and from their own peers, which can lead to emotional imbalances (30). It has been observed that violence in intimate relationships can have long-term consequences, such as hypertension, heart disease, obesity, smoking-related diseases, and sexually transmitted infections (31).

It was also evidenced that men who are in abusive relationships are more likely to experience depression or other mental health problems, as well as to engage in unhealthy behaviors such as substance abuse, drug use combined with sex, or unprotected sex (20). It has also been observed that gay men tend to normalize physically or emotionally violent behaviors in their relationships as part of their masculine identity (25). Other patterns of

psychological violence include criticism that undermines self-confidence and self-esteem, along with controlling behaviors (41). In addition, one study found that more than two-thirds of the population reported perpetrating some form of intimate partner violence, with verbal abuse, manipulation, and cheating being the most frequently mentioned (42). These violent behaviors are not limited to cohabiting relationships, but are also observed during dating, where LGBTIQ+ youth have the highest rates of victimization and perpetration of psychological violence.

The results indicate that in abusive relationships, both in heterosexual and homosexual couples, there is a constant struggle for power and control, manifested through physical, psychological, emotional, and sexual abuse (19). The connection between alcohol consumption and physical aggression in lesbian and bisexual

# MENTAL HEALTH AND POWER DYNAMICS IN LGBTQ+ RELATIONSHIPS

Table 7. Risk factors, health conditions and vulnerability characteristics associated with violence.

Title	Authors	Year	Continent	Finding
Intimate partner abuse among gay and bisexual men: risk correlates and health outcomes (20)	Houston and McKirnan	2007	América	Bisexual individuals who had experienced sexual abuse were more likely to report health problems, such as hypertension, heart disease, sexually transmitted infections, and being overweight. In addition, they mentioned suffering from depression or other mental problems, as well as tending to engage in substance abuse.
Intimate Partner Violence Among Sexual Minorities in Japan: Exploring Perceptions and Experiences (45)	DiStefano	2009	Asia	Twenty-three percent reported having experienced first-person intimate partner violence; in Japan, the existence of this phenomenon is not admitted. Men identified various sources of tension, such as gender role conflicts, relationship inequalities, discrepancies in the public expression of sexual identity, substance use, jealousy, and external homophobic violence. Alcohol and drug use by one or both partners was also perceived as a factor that increased and exacerbated conflict.
Struggling to be the alpha': sources of tension and intimate partner violence in same-sex relationships between men (46)	Goldenberg, Stephenson, Freeland, Finneran, Hadley	2016	América	Results show that youth experiencing insecurities have a higher average victimization rate (mean=32.83, standard deviation=16.71) compared to bisexual couples (mean=23.81, standard deviation=2.75). A close relationship is evident between risk factors and the likelihood of intimate partner violence victimization in the LGBTQ+ community, highlighting family abuse, homelessness in the past year, and excessive alcohol consumption. It is suggested that mental distress, which includes symptoms such as sadness, anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorders, along with psychoactive substance use, may be associated with violence in LGBTQ+ couple relationships.
Partner Violence Victimization Among Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Youth: Associations Among Risk Factors (2)	Langenderfer-Magruder, Walls, Whitfield, Brown, Barrett	2016	América	
A Longitudinal Study of IPV Victimization among Sexual Minority Youth (47)	Whitton, Newcomb, Messinger, Byck, & Mustanski	2016	América	
Empirical Investigation of a Model of Sexual Minority Specific and General Risk Factors for Intimate Partner Violence among (9)	Lewis, Mason, Winstead, Kelley	2017	América	The results of this study provide evidence on specific and general risk factors, which may be amenable to change, for violence in lesbian women's relationships.
Disproportionately high: an exploration of the prevalence rates of intimate partner violence for bisexual individuals (48)	Turell, Brown and Herrmann	2018	América	Couples that included bisexual individuals showed higher scores on the abusive behavior questionnaire. Similarly, higher scores on partner negativity were related to higher scores on the total reported abusive behavior questionnaire.
Homophobia is online: Sexual victimization and risks on the internet and mental health among bisexual, homosexual, pansexual, asexual, and queer adolescents (49)	Gómez-Guadix and Incera	2021	América	The analysis highlights the tendency of sexual minorities to seek refuge in online communities and platforms where they can express themselves with greater confidence and connect with individuals who share their sexual orientation. This choice is due to the avoidance of discrimination experienced in face-to-face interactions with society, although in the virtual realm they also face harassment and manipulation.
Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence and Associated Factors Among Men Who Have Sex with Men in China (38)	Wei et al.	2021	Asia	35.5 % of people reported having experienced intimate partner violence, while 27.6 % identified themselves as perpetrators.
Relationship Power and Intimate Partner Violence in Sexual Minority Male Couples (7)	Bosco, Robles, Stephenson, Starks	2022	América	In the analysis of individual variables, a positive correlation was found between depression (as an individual risk factor) and childhood sexual abuse (as a family risk factor) with intimate partner violence.
Lesbian partner violence and perceived social support (50)	Furukawa, Pessoa, Komatsu	2022	América	In addition to facing discrimination because of their affectional orientation towards women, lesbians experience what is known as the "double closet" phenomenon, which involves hiding the suffering of intimate partner violence and not sharing it with their social environment.
Understanding the Profile and Needs of Abused Men: Exploring Call Data from a Male Domestic Violence Charity in the United Kingdom (51)	Hine, Wallace, Bates	2022	Europa	The number of gay men who sought help was very low, which could indicate that they do not seek support due to various factors or that they do not have access to it.
News Stories of intimate partner violence: an experimental examination of media framing and perpetrator gender in LGBTQ versus heterosexual relationships (52)	Savage, Scarduzio, Milne	2022	América	This study raises the possibility that participants may not recognize a woman as a victim in a lesbian relationship, given that she is not being affected by intimate partner violence perpetrated by a male aggressor, which could raise doubts about her status as a victim deserving of support.
Untangling the Relationship Between Internalized Hetero-sexism and Psychological Intimate Partner Violence Perpetration: A Comparative Study of Lesbians and Bisexual Women in Turkey and Denmark (53)	Ummak, Toplu-Demirtaş, & Jessen	2022	Europa	A higher incidence of same-sex partner violence was observed in Turkey compared to Denmark. The increased vulnerability of LGBTQ+ people in Turkey, together with the lack of protective measures against discrimination, can be understood as the objective distress described in the minority stress framework.
College students' perceptions of intimate partner violence: the effects of type of abuse and gender of perpetrator (54)	Wilson and Smirles	2022	América	Due to the persistence of sexism in society, LGBTQ+ individuals who experience intimate partner violence may not receive the same attention as heterosexual individuals in similar situations.

couples highlights the lack of understanding about the individual behavior of these couples, underscoring the vulnerability of this group scarcely explored from a more inclusive gender perspective (37). The issue of intimate partner violence and its repercussions on the health of the LGBTIQ+ community constitutes a relevant public health issue that demands immediate intervention, given that measures to address it have not yet been implemented (36).

One study indicates that homosexual or bisexual men experience higher rates of intimate partner violence, which leads to serious health consequences, such as sexual violence and family rejection due to various forms of aggression (41). In the area of intimate partner violence, it is observed that there was no evidence of an increase in violence among LGBTIQ+ individuals with erectile dysfunction, with sexual minorities reporting its prevalence in both past and current partners in abusive situations. These individuals may turn into health professionals for support in reporting violent victimization by intimate partners (35). Intimate partner violence impacts LGBTQ+ adolescents at higher rates than their heterosexual counterparts, varying in frequency and type of violence by sexual orientation (11).

According to the data presented in Table 6, in Europe and Asia, it is observed that in some studies there is a higher incidence of psychological and sexual violence among lesbian and bisexual women, while gay men appear to be more exposed to physical and sexual violence (21). However, other studies have revealed that 43.8 % of lesbian women and 26 % of gay men have experienced at least one type of sexual, physical, or harassment violence by an intimate partner at some point in their lives (28). Therefore, it can be inferred that physical violence is a significant aspect in intimate partner relationships between women. In the case of bisexual people, it is observed that the most common form of abuse is of an emotional nature, often manifesting itself in a covert, subtle and passive-aggressive manner, which can lead to victims not recognizing it as violence. This could be the result of several factors, such as lack of experience and the normalization of certain behaviors due to having grown up in environments where this was common, so that sometimes people only become aware of the abuse long after the relationship has ended (24).

In the case of bisexual and homosexual men, although they are aware of being victims of violence by their partners, they often choose not to mention it due to the social pressure imposed by certain stereotypes of masculinity and the expectations associated with traditional masculinity (28). The fear of being judged and discriminated against for not fulfilling these established roles leads to a silencing of the issue (51). Within the context of violence in same-sex relationships, higher rates of reports are observed when combined with internalizing homophobia and substance use during sexual encounters, with 15.1 % of physical assault and 12.1 % of unprotected sexual coercion (31). In gay male couples, no clear pattern of violence is identified (7). In Japan, physical violence follows a cycle in which aggression gradually increases in intensity, reaches a critical point before exploding, and then returns to a calm state before restarting a new cycle of violence (30). As for psychological violence, in addition to tactics such as manipulation, harassment and blackmail, emphasis is placed on the damage caused to the person's sexual and gender identity, accompanied by deception with the intention of causing emotional harm (45).

Finally, it could be observed that homosexual and bisexual men face a higher risk of suffering violence in intimate relationships, but in the case of gay men it is more likely that this violence affects their daily activities, as they report a high percentage of absences from work or school due to partner violence (30). In studies conducted in Portugal, lesbian women were found to have an incidence rate of physical violence of 48.3 %, higher than that of gay men, who register 38.5 %. As for psychological violence, it was estimated at 69.2 % in men and 65.5 % in women (32). Research indicates a higher prevalence of physical and sexual violence in lesbian women compared to homosexual men, with behaviors that include strangulation, pushing and shoving, and hitting in sexual contexts (55).

### **Risk factors, health conditions and vulnerability**

According to the data presented in Table 7, it was observed that men with a history of family violence, instability in their homes, and problems related to alcohol consumption were more likely to experience intimate partner violence (VIP)



according to Langenderfer-Magruder et al. (2,56). On the other hand, Adams et al. (11) noted that students were at greater risk of experiencing VIP in unwelcome school environments. In contrast, Alexander et al. (6) found that bisexual and black women were more likely to be victims of partner violence compared to white women. Turell et al. (48) identified that negativity toward bisexuality and prejudice associated with this sexual orientation contributed to the perpetuation of abuse, as bisexuality was linked to infidelity in some relationships. All the studies reviewed established a connection between victimization and factors such as economic inequalities, substance use, such as drugs and alcohol, and educational level, which could foster power dynamics conducive to controlling and abusive behaviors, according to Stevens et al. (55).

Factors such as internalized homophobia, attachment anxiety and romantic attachment are aspects that contribute to the prevalence of perpetration of partner violence in sexual minority relationships. These elements share the characteristics of generating insecurity in people, both about themselves and their partners, which, according to research, could lead the person to adopt aggressive behaviors within the relationship (32). It was observed that, despite the existence of protection laws for these minorities, factors such as social rejection and pressure from the community to maintain a non-violent image are determinants in the perpetuation of intimate partner violence (32). The presence of violence in same-sex relationships in the Americas is characterized by the influence of alcohol and drug abuse, which are highlighted as elements conducive to violence, as individuals experience a sense of power and superiority when under the influence of these substances, in contrast to their sober state, in which they show the opposite (10).

This dynamic may be associated with the low self-esteem and insecure attachment present in the relationship (7). The disparity in rates of intimate partner violence among lesbian women is discussed and attributed in part to the lack of attention in studies on this issue, compounded by the ingrained societal perception of women as “good-natured” or “fragile,” which perpetuates the misconception that intimate partner violence among women is nonexistent (55).

Studies by Langenderfer-Magruder et al. (56) and Duncan et al. (8) revealed that men who have been victims of intimate partner violence are at increased risk for physical health problems such as hypertension, heart disease, and obesity. Likewise, a relationship was found between substance and alcohol use and a history of intimate partner violence (57). In terms of mental health, both men and women in general are more likely to experience high levels of anxiety and depression. Bisexual women were found to have a higher incidence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (6). On the other hand, both homosexual and bisexual men were found to have a good understanding of physical and psychological violence, but show insecurity regarding sexual violence. Although they recognize the importance of consent in sexual relationships, many feel uncomfortable and pressured in such situations, unsure whether they can consider them as sexual violence (41).

When identifying the severity and frequency of different forms of abuse, many often highlight physical violence (54). However, gay and bisexual men often lack a clear understanding of the potential relationship tensions that can trigger intimate partner violence (VIP) (46). Traditional perceptions of masculinity, which discourage vulnerability, have been identified as a contributing factor to VIP and its concealment, as there is a tendency to normalize these behaviors by considering them part of male nature (25). Psychological violence was found to be the most prevalent, with 66.7 %, followed by physical violence with 45.2 % (32). In addition, sociocultural factors that contribute to the persistence of violent acts in intimate partner relationships within the LGBTIQ+ community were identified (57).

## DISCUSSION

The results of this research highlight the presence of violence in LGBTIQ+ intimate partner relationships in various parts of the world, with special emphasis on the Americas, Europe, and Asia (58). The diversity of types of violence experienced spans physical, sexual, psychological, and emotional (30). Furthermore, these findings indicate the presence of contextual

and sociocultural factors that impact the prevalence and characteristics of intimate partner violence in different settings (58).

Despite variations in forms of gender-based violence by sexual orientation and gender in Europe, it is essential to recognize the diversity of experiences within the LGBTIQ+ community (21,25). These findings also raise questions about the underlying factors contributing to intimate partner violence within these groups (27). On the other hand, studies in Asia show a wide range of domestic violence, from repetitive physical violence in Japan to more subtle tactics of psychological violence in China, highlighting the importance of understanding domestic violence in its specific cultural context and fostering awareness and education in such nations (38). In addition to the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ people and regional differences, the findings emphasize the importance of addressing gender-based violence in the context of LGBTQ+ people's physical and mental health (55). The sequelae of intimate partner violence are reflected in health conditions such as anxiety, depression, hypertension, and substance abuse, underscoring the need to provide adequate support and resources to victims, as well as to prevent the perpetuation of gender-based violence (31).

Historically, research on intimate partner violence has focused primarily on heterosexual couples, neglecting the experiences of LGBTIQ+ individuals (11). Recently, however, there has been a significant increase in studies that focus specifically on the experience of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals in situations of intimate partner violence (53). This shift in research focus, given that current research indicates that the prevalence of intimate partner violence in the LGBTQ+ community is like, and even higher than, that observed in heterosexual groups (19). The evidence is clear: LGBTIQ+ people face unique challenges in their relationships and require special attention (6). Also, rates of partner violence are even higher in same-sex couples than in different-sex couples (5).

In Europe, significant differences were observed in the types of intimate partner violence according to sexual orientation and gender.

Research by Hester and Donovan (21) and Longares et al. (28) highlight that lesbian and bisexual women are more likely to experience psychological and sexual violence, while gay men face a higher risk of suffering physical and sexual violence. Importantly, despite these trends, several studies (8,10) have revealed that a significant portion of lesbian women and gay men experience physical and sexual violence in their relationships, highlighting the importance of recognizing that physical violence can manifest itself in violent domestic relationships between women, even if other types of violence are more common (28).

In the Americas, Europe and Asia, studies on gender-based violence and risk factors in LGBTIQ+ relationships show significant variations. In the Americas, there is a risk of systematic discrimination and internalized homophobia/transphobia, while in Europe cultural and social attitudes affect experiences of violence. Violence in Asia ranges from physical to psychological and is rooted in cultural contexts. Therefore, when analyzing this phenomenon, it is important to consider the global identity, culture and social context when preventing and supporting victims due to the complexity of risk factors.

Based on theoretical approaches that address minority stress and social learning, the relationship between family dynamics, authoritarian parenting styles and behavioral microaggressions with the presence of psychological violence and sexual violence victimization was investigated, and it was found that, although aspects such as family conflict, strict parenting and criminal behaviors were present in the model, only criminal behavior showed a significant and positive connection with victimization and perpetration (44). In addition, bisexual people were found to face challenges in their romantic relationships, where emotional abuse, often subtle and passive, presents as a frequent form of victimization. These behaviors may result from unfamiliarity with same-gender relationships and habitual acceptance of abusive behaviors in their environment, which may result in these victims not initially recognizing such behavior as violence (24).

Another aspect to keep in mind is that LGBTIQ+ people, especially gay and bisexual

men, are susceptible to various forms of domestic violence, including physical and sexual violence (5). Factors such as drug use, internalized homophobia, and fear of discrimination have been found to be linked to domestic violence in this population. Duncan et al. (8) support the idea that geo-specific social network interactions may expose LGBTQ+ individuals to additional risks, such as intimate partner violence (IPV).

Another factor to consider are the denunciations and reports of violence in homosexual and bisexual couples, due to social pressures linked to masculinity and sexual orientation (1). This situation also reflects high rates of gender-based violence in these groups, as reluctance to report abuse increases the likelihood of physical, sexual, and psychological violence (51). Despite this, many bisexual and gay men do not report these abuses or seek support (10). Social stigma around masculinity and sexual orientation contributes to this persistent silence, as the fear of being judged or discriminated against for not conforming to traditional stereotypes of masculinity acts as a significant deterrent (44).

Research has shown that these three factors are closely linked and can have serious impacts on the health and well-being of LGBTIQ+ individuals. Gay men who experience internalized homophobia may face feelings of aversion or guilt due to their sexual orientation (23). This emotional burden can create an environment conducive to the perpetuation of violence in intimate partner relationships, as victims may feel that they deserve the abuse or that they do not deserve help (51). On the other hand, substance use may be a way to cope with intimate partner violence or may be related to power and control dynamics in relationships, as well as to lower inhibitions and increase the likelihood of violent acts (20).

The analysis of violence in intimate relationships within the LGBTIQ+ community highlights the diversity and complexity at a global level, since the phenomenon of violence impacts bisexual, homosexual and transgender people, and is evidenced in various forms of abuse. Therefore, society must adopt a comprehensive approach and create a culture of violence prevention. Awareness-raising, education and promotion of acceptance and respect for diversity are essential

to address violence in all its manifestations to create a safe and inclusive environment for all.

Finally, violence in intimate relationships within the LGBTIQ+ community is a major problem, especially among lesbian and bisexual women. Risk was also found to be increased by substance use, adverse family environments, discrimination, and sexual orientation stress. Self-esteem and economic dependence influence a tendency to minimize violence. To make progress in research, an intersectional approach that considers various identities and social factors is needed. It is important to improve research approaches, employing mixed techniques to gain a deeper understanding of experiences of violence. In practice, it is important to educate about healthy relationships, empower witnesses and allies, and promote inclusion and respect for diversity in terms of prevention. Moreover, vulnerable populations and high-risk environments should also be prioritized, with an emphasis on educating youth, offering victim-centered services, treating perpetrators, and supporting survivors. These strategies need to be implemented in an inclusive manner, ensuring the ongoing consideration of the voices of the LGBTIQ+ community.

## CONCLUSIONS

Regarding the characteristics of the studies analyzed, most of the academic research is conducted in the Americas, followed by Europe and, in the last place, Asia. Most of these studies are published in English.

The results of this review show that lesbian and bisexual women experience a high prevalence of violence in their intimate relationships, being the most affected compared to other groups, particularly compared to men. This circumstance is attributed to social acceptance and permissiveness towards violence against women in intimate partner relationships, as well as to the greater risk this group faces of confronting interpersonal conflicts of this nature.

A direct relationship was identified between the use of substances such as alcohol and drugs and the appearance of violent behaviors in intimate partner relationships, which increases the probability of being involved in this

type of situation. Other risk factors for both perpetrators and victims of violence in intimate relationships include problematic and adverse family environments, as well as experiences of discrimination and stress associated with sexual orientation.

Finally, research shows a disturbing tendency to minimize and deny intimate partner violence within the LGBTIQ+ community. Most support services, prevention programs, and mental health promotion programs are directed primarily at heterosexual couples, highlighting the need to raise awareness and sensitivity to this issue in all relationships.

### Conflict of interest

The corresponding authors declare that there is no conflict of interest, none of the authors have any relationship or familiarity with the editorial members, and the sources included have been adequately cited and in the appropriate context.

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