

UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À MONTRÉAL

LA VIOLENCE SUBIE DANS LES RELATIONS AMOUREUSES DES FILLES À
L'ADOLESCENCE ET AU DÉBUT DE L'ÂGE ADULTE : STYLE DE VIE À
RISQUE ET CONTEXTES ASSOCIÉS

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*À ma maman.
Celle qui m'a absolument tout donné.*

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RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse de doctorat porte sur l'examen des facteurs associés à la violence subie dans les relations amoureuses des filles. Plusieurs études ont démontré que les filles qui manifestent davantage de problèmes de comportement durant l'enfance et/ou l'adolescence sont plus à risque d'être victimes de violence dans leurs relations amoureuses. Or, ces études n'ont pas examiné cette relation à l'intérieur d'un cadre développemental et contextuel. De plus, très peu d'entre elles ont évalué l'influence de ces problèmes comportementaux sur la continuité des expériences de victimisation de l'adolescence à l'émergence de l'âge adulte. Cette thèse s'est intéressée à la contribution de ces difficultés comportementales ainsi qu'aux facteurs contextuels pouvant y être associés (association avec des pairs déviants et supervision parentale) pour prédire la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles à l'adolescence, et les trajectoires de victimisation de l'adolescence au début de l'âge adulte. Les participantes de l'étude ont été recrutées alors qu'elles étaient en maternelle dans le cadre d'un vaste projet de recherche longitudinal intitulé « l'Étude longitudinale des enfants de maternelle au Québec (ÉLEMQ) ». Les participantes ont été suivies pendant plus de 15 ans et ont été interrogées à l'âge de 15 et 21 ans en lien avec leurs expériences de victimisation vécues dans les relations amoureuses. La thèse comporte deux articles empiriques; le premier article porte sur la violence subie à l'adolescence, tandis que le second examine les patrons longitudinaux de victimisation.

Dans le premier article, la valeur prédictive d'un modèle médiateur inspiré des théories des activités routinières et des styles de vie (« *lifestyles and routine activities theories* ») a été examinée auprès d'un échantillon de 550 adolescentes. Le modèle postule que l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque (c.-à-d., comportements sexuels à risque, consommation problématique de substances psychotropes et délinquance) médiatise la relation entre l'association avec des pairs déviants et la violence subie dans les relations amoureuses des adolescentes. Des analyses de régression logistique hiérarchique ont été utilisées et ont considéré les problèmes de comportement à l'enfance ainsi que la supervision parentale à l'adolescence. Les résultats ont démontré que la relation entre l'association avec des pairs déviants et la violence subie dans les relations amoureuses pouvait effectivement être expliquée, du moins partiellement pour la violence psychologique et complètement pour la violence physique/sexuelle, par l'adoption chez les filles d'un style de vie à risque.

Dans le deuxième article, deux objectifs principaux étaient visés. Le premier objectif consistait à documenter la prévalence des patrons longitudinaux de violence subie dans les relations amoureuses des filles. Les expériences de victimisation rapportées par les filles à l'âge de 15 ans et 21 ans ont été utilisées et les jeunes femmes (N = 435) ont été regroupées en quatre catégories : « *n'a pas été victimisée* »,

« a été victimisée exclusivement à l'adolescence », « a été victimisée exclusivement au début de l'âge adulte » et « a été revictimisée ». Les résultats ont révélé que 18,4% des filles ont vécu de la violence psychologique et 14,3% de la violence physique/sexuelle exclusivement à l'adolescence, 26,4% de la violence psychologique et 12,6% de la violence physique/sexuelle exclusivement au début de l'âge adulte, et un nombre considérable de filles ont été revictimisées (violence psychologique = 9,4% et violence physique/sexuelle = 2,5%). Le deuxième objectif était d'examiner la contribution respective des problèmes de comportement dans l'enfance ainsi que l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque à l'adolescence pour prédire les patrons longitudinaux de victimisation. Des analyses de régression logistique multinomiale ont été utilisées et la catégorie « n'a pas été victimisée » a servi de groupe de référence. Les résultats ont indiqué, en considérant l'association avec des pairs déviants et la supervision parentale à l'adolescence, que les problèmes de comportement dans l'enfance ainsi que l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque à l'adolescence étaient associés à des probabilités plus élevées pour les filles d'être victimes de violence (psychologique et/ou physique/sexuelle) à l'adolescence ou au début de l'âge adulte, ou encore d'être revictimisées.

En conclusion, les résultats de cette thèse comportent des implications pratiques importantes au plan des initiatives de prévention de la violence dans le contexte des relations amoureuses. En effet, ils suggèrent la pertinence de prévenir et traiter, d'une part, les problèmes de comportement émergeant dans l'enfance et, d'autre part, l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque à l'adolescence simultanément avec la victimisation. Enfin, puisque l'affiliation avec des pairs déviants s'est révélée associée à l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque et, par conséquent, à un risque accru de victimisation dans les relations amoureuses, les groupes d'adolescents plus déviants pourraient constituer une population cible auprès de laquelle implanter des mesures préventives de la violence.

Mots clés : violence, relations amoureuses, adolescentes, jeunes femmes, longitudinal

CHAPITRE I

INTRODUCTION GÉNÉRALE

INTRODUCTION GÉNÉRALE

Les relations amoureuses occupent une place grandissante dans l'univers des jeunes durant l'adolescence et elles constituent un élément central du développement social et affectif à cet âge (Collins, 2003; Furman, 2002; Feiring et Furman, 2000). Une enquête réalisée auprès d'un échantillon représentatif des adolescents québécois indique que 53 % des filles de 13 ans et 83 % des filles de 16 ans ont déjà vécu des expériences amoureuses (Fernet, Imbleau, et Pilote, 2002). Malheureusement, même dans le contexte des premières fréquentations, l'amour et la violence ne sont pas toujours mutuellement exclusifs. En effet, une proportion alarmante d'adolescentes québécoises rapportent avoir été victimes de violence de la part de leur partenaire amoureux (Lavoie et Vézina, 2002).

1.1 Définition de la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses

La violence dans les relations amoureuses des jeunes peut être définie comme étant « *tout comportement ayant pour effet de nuire au développement de l'autre en compromettant son intégrité physique, psychologique ou sexuelle* » (Lavoie, Vézina, Gosselin, et Robitaille, 1994). Il existe plusieurs formes de violence; les principales étant la violence psychologique, la violence physique et la violence sexuelle (Lavoie et Vézina, 2001).

Selon un document du Directeur de la santé publique de Montréal (2011), la violence psychologique réfère à « *l'usage de menaces, de tromperies, de contrôle ayant pour effet de bouleverser l'autre, de compromettre son bien-être* ». Par exemple, une fille ayant été victime de violence psychologique pourrait avoir été dénigrée, insultée ou avoir eu à subir l'indifférence de son partenaire amoureux. La violence physique réfère à « *l'usage de la force physique ou d'objets de façon à compromettre l'intégrité physique de l'autre* ». Ainsi, une fille ayant été victime de

violence physique pourrait avoir été bousculée par son partenaire amoureux, avoir reçu une gifle ou un coup de poing, etc. Enfin, la violence sexuelle réfère à tout « *comportement qui incite ou qui force une autre personne à être témoin ou à s'engager dans des activités sexuelles sans son consentement* ». Par exemple, une fille ayant été victime de violence sexuelle de la part de son partenaire amoureux pourrait avoir subi de la pression (ex. : menaces, intimidation, ruse, chantage) ou avoir été contrainte par l'usage de la force physique à avoir des rapports sexuels. Dans la présente thèse, le terme « *victimisation* » désigne toute forme de violence subie dans les relations amoureuses, qu'elle soit psychologique, physique et/ou sexuelle.

1.2 Ampleur du problème et conséquences associées

Selon les données provenant de l'enquête réalisée auprès d'un échantillon représentatif des jeunes québécois, Lavoie et Vézina (2002) estiment que 21% des filles de 13 ans et 34% des filles de 16 ans ont subi de la violence psychologique; 15% des filles de 13 ans et 20% des filles de 16 ans ont subi de la violence physique; et 6% des filles de 13 ans et 11% des filles de 16 ans ont subi de la violence sexuelle dans leurs relations amoureuses au cours des 12 mois précédant l'étude. De plus, 9% des filles de 13 ans et 18% des filles de 16 ans rapportent avoir subi au moins deux de ces types de victimisation. D'autres études menées auprès d'échantillons représentatifs des jeunes américains indiquent des taux de prévalence tout aussi considérables. Par exemple, Halpern, Oslak, Young, Martin et Kupper (2001) rapportent que 29% des filles ont subi de la violence psychologique dans leurs relations amoureuses et 12% de la violence physique. Silverman, Raj, Mucci et Hathaway (2001) suggèrent quant à eux qu'environ 20% des filles ont subi de la violence physique et/ou de la violence sexuelle de la part d'un partenaire qu'elles ont fréquenté. Dans ces études américaines, les jeunes femmes âgées entre 18 et 21 ans ont aussi été incluses et les résultats indiquent que le risque de victimisation

augmente avec l'âge. Tout comme les adolescentes, un nombre important de jeunes femmes rapportent effectivement avoir subi de la violence dans leurs relations amoureuses (Halpern, Spriggs, Martin, et Kupper, 2009; Magdol *et al.*, 1997; Smith, White, et Holland, 2003).

La victimisation dans les relations amoureuses est associée à la manifestation concomitante ou ultérieure de nombreux troubles de l'adaptation chez les filles. Les recherches font état notamment de troubles alimentaires, de symptômes de stress post-traumatique et dépressifs, de problèmes de consommation et d'abus de substances, ainsi que de conduites suicidaires (Ackard, Eisenberg, et Neumark-Stzainer, 2007; Ackard et Neumark-Stzainer, 2002; Callahan, Tolman, et Saunders, 2003; Coker *et al.*, 2000; Roberts, Klein, et Fisher, 2003; Wolitzky-Taylor *et al.*, 2008). La victimisation est également associée à une probabilité plus élevée de revictimisation dans les relations amoureuses futures (Lehrer, Buka, Gortmaker, et Schrier, 2006; Smith *et al.*, 2003). En effet, une étude longitudinale menée par Spriggs, Halpern et Martin (2009) révèle qu'un pourcentage important des filles ont vécu des expériences répétées de victimisation. Parmi celles qui déclaraient avoir été victimes de violence physique dans leurs relations amoureuses à l'adolescence, 33% ont été revictimisées au début de l'âge adulte. La continuité des expériences de victimisation entre l'adolescence et la transition à l'âge adulte apparaît donc élevée. Conséquemment, il semble important d'examiner de façon prospective la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles de l'adolescence au début de l'âge adulte. Toutefois, peu d'études se sont intéressées au problème de la revictimisation, et parmi celles qui l'ont fait, rares sont celles qui ont utilisé un devis longitudinal-prospectif (à l'exception de Halpern *et al.*, 2009; Lehrer *et al.*, 2006; Smith *et al.*, 2003; Spriggs *et al.*, 2009).

En somme, la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles constitue une problématique sociale et de santé publique alarmante, non pas seulement en raison de son taux de prévalence élevé, mais aussi à cause des répercussions néfastes qu'elle entraîne sur la santé psychologique et physique des victimes. Très préoccupantes, ces données nous interpellent tout particulièrement quant à

l'importance de prévenir l'occurrence de la violence dans les relations amoureuses et d'intervenir le plus tôt possible avant qu'une trajectoire de victimisation ne s'installe. L'analyse des facteurs de risque associés à la victimisation apparaît donc comme étant une priorité de recherche à adresser (Hickman, Jaycox, et Aronoff, 2005; Sugarman et Hotaling, 1989). En effet, il est important d'identifier les facteurs qui augmentent le risque que les filles soient victimes de violence dans leurs relations amoureuses, de même qu'il semble être essentiel d'identifier les facteurs de risque associés à la revictimisation. Les études menées en ce sens peuvent permettre de mieux identifier les clientèles et les facteurs cibles à privilégier dans les programmes de prévention et d'intervention de la violence.

La présente thèse utilise un devis longitudinal et porte sur les trois formes de violence (c.-à.-d., psychologique, physique et sexuelle) subies spécifiquement par les filles dans les relations amoureuses à l'adolescence et au début de l'âge adulte. Elle propose d'examiner la relation entre certains facteurs personnels et contextuels et la victimisation. Plus précisément, cette thèse s'intéresse à la contribution des problèmes de comportement et des facteurs contextuels pouvant y être associés (c.-à.-d., l'affiliation avec des pairs déviants et la supervision parentale) dans la prédiction de la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles à l'adolescence, ainsi que des trajectoires de victimisation de l'adolescence au début de l'âge adulte. Cette démarche ne nie aucunement que les garçons puissent également subir des gestes de violence de la part de leur partenaire amoureuse. Plusieurs études démontrent d'ailleurs que les taux de prévalence de la victimisation des filles et des garçons sont comparables (Halpern *et al.*, 2001; O'Leary, Smith Slep, Avery-Leaf, et Cascardi, 2008). Par contre, la violence sexuelle semble davantage être vécue par les filles que par les garçons (Foshee, 1996; Molidor et Tolman, 1998; Wolitzky-Taylor *et al.*, 2008). Celles-ci semblent également être affectées plus sévèrement par la victimisation sur les plans émotionnel et de leur intégrité physique que les garçons (Barter, 2009; Cercone, Beach, et Arias, 2005; Foshee, 2006; Jackson, 1999; Molidor et Tolman, 1998; Munoz-Rivas, Grana, O'Leary, et Gonzalez, 2007). Afin de

circonscrire les ancrages empiriques de cette recherche, une synthèse des études ayant documenté des associations significatives entre les problèmes de comportement et la victimisation est d'abord présentée.

1.3 Les problèmes de comportement et la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses

En 2007, Vézina et Hébert ont publié une recension des études portant sur les facteurs de risque associés à la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles. Une des conclusions de cette recension était que les problèmes de comportement tels que les pratiques sexuelles à risque, la consommation et l'abus de substances psychotropes, ainsi que les comportements antisociaux et délinquants, semblent faire partie intégrale du portrait des filles qui ont subi de la violence dans le contexte des relations amoureuses.

1.3.1 Les comportements sexuels à risque

Les comportements sexuels à risque qui ont été évalués en lien avec la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles sont : a) le nombre élevé de partenaires sexuels, b) les relations sexuelles précoces et c) l'usage inadéquat des méthodes contraceptives, plus précisément du condom. Ainsi, plusieurs études suggèrent que plus les filles ont eu des relations sexuelles avec un nombre élevé de partenaires, plus elles sont susceptibles d'avoir été victimes de l'une ou l'autre, ou de plusieurs, des formes de violence dans leurs relations amoureuses (Eaton, Davis, Barrios, Brener, et Noonan, 2007; Gover, 2004; Howard et Wang, 2003; Krahé, 1998; Kreiter *et al.*, 1999; Neufeld, McNamara, et Ertl, 1999; Silverman *et al.*, 2001; Synovitz et Byrne, 1998). Par exemple, à l'aide d'un large échantillon représentatif des jeunes américains ($n = 7\ 437$ adolescentes), Eaton *et al.* (2007) rapportent que les filles qui ont eu plus de six partenaires sexuels dans leur vie sont quatre fois plus à

risque d'être victimes de violence physique de la part de leur partenaire amoureux que les filles qui n'ont jamais eu de partenaire sexuel.

Eaton *et al.* (2007) suggèrent également, tout comme Lavoie et Vézina (2002), que les filles qui ont vécu leur première relation sexuelle avant l'âge de 13 ans sont plus à risque d'être victimisées que celles qui ont vécu leur première expérience après cet âge ou qui ne sont pas encore actives sexuellement. Halpern *et al.* (2009) soutiennent que parmi tous les facteurs qu'ils ont examiné en lien avec les patrons longitudinaux de victimisation (c.-à-d., victimisation exclusivement à l'adolescence, victimisation exclusivement au début de l'âge adulte et victimisation aux deux périodes), seul le fait d'avoir eu sa première relation sexuelle avant l'âge de 16 ans s'est révélé être associé à tous les patrons de violence subie par les jeunes adultes.

Nonobstant le nombre de partenaires sexuels ou l'âge des débuts sexuels, le seul fait d'être active sexuellement s'est révélé être associé à l'une ou l'autre, ou à plusieurs, des formes de victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles (Eaton *et al.*, 1997; Kaestle et Halpern, 2005; Raghavan, Bogart, Elliott, Vestal, et Schuster, 2004). Kaestle et Halpern (2005) rapportent que les relations sexuelles entre les partenaires semblent davantage précéder les épisodes de violence, qu'elles soient de nature psychologique ou physique, que l'inverse. Finalement, certaines études suggèrent que la non-utilisation du condom lors des relations sexuelles est associée à l'une ou l'autre des formes de victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles (Howard et Wang, 2003, 2005; Kreiter *et al.*, 1999; Rickert, Wiemann, Harrykisson, Berenson, et Kolb, 2002; Roberts, Auinger, et Klein, 2005).

1.3.2 La consommation et l'abus de substances psychotropes

La majorité des études qui ont évalué le lien entre la consommation et/ou l'abus de substances psychotropes (drogue et/ou alcool) et l'une ou l'autre, ou plusieurs, des formes de violence dans les relations amoureuses des filles indiquent qu'elles sont positivement associées (Buzy *et al.*, 2004; Eaton *et al.*, 2007; Gover,

2004; Harned, 2002; Howard et Wang, 2003; Kreiter *et al.*, 1999; Lavoie et Vézina, 2002; Magdol *et al.*, 1997; Magdol, Moffitt, Caspi, et Silva, 1998; Malik, Sorenson, et Aneshensel, 1997; Raghavan *et al.*, 2004; Silverman *et al.*, 2001; Symons, Groër, Kepler-Youngblood, et Slater, 1994; Synovitz et Byrne, 1998; Testa, Livingston, et Leonard, 2003). Certaines de ces études ont utilisé un devis longitudinal et démontrent que la consommation et l'abus de substances (ex. : alcool, cannabis, cocaïne) agissent à titre de précurseurs de la victimisation (Magdol *et al.*, 1998; Raghavan *et al.*, 2004; Testa *et al.*, 2003). Par exemple, Magdol *et al.* (1998) rapportent que la consommation et l'abus de substances à l'âge de 15 ans (ex : avoir été ivre dans un endroit public, avoir fumé du cannabis, avoir reniflé de la colle) est associé à la victimisation psychologique et physique des jeunes femmes à l'âge de 21 ans.

1.3.3 Les comportements antisociaux et délinquants

Plusieurs études démontrent la présence d'un lien significatif entre les comportements antisociaux ou délinquants tels que les troubles d'opposition et de désobéissance, les fugues, les vols ou le vandalisme, et l'une ou l'autre, ou plusieurs, des formes de victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles (Ehrensaft *et al.*, 2003; Lavoie et Vézina, 2002; Magdol *et al.*, 1997; Magdol *et al.*, 1998; Woodward, Fergusson, et Horwood, 2002). Trois des études qui identifient ces problèmes de comportement comme étant des facteurs associés à la victimisation ont employé un devis longitudinal. Ainsi, Ehrensaft *et al.* (2003) indiquent que les jeunes adultes qui présentaient des troubles de la conduite à l'adolescence sont quatre fois plus à risque que ceux qui n'en présentaient pas d'être victimes de violence physique dans leurs relations amoureuses. Toutefois, cette association ne se révèle plus significative lorsque les problèmes familiaux sont inclus dans les analyses. Ces résultats ne concordent pas avec ceux de Magdol *et al.* (1998). Ces derniers rapportent que les problèmes de comportement durant l'enfance et l'adolescence sont les facteurs de

risque les plus importants pour prédire la victimisation physique et psychologique vécues au début de l'âge adulte et ce, même en contrôlant pour certains facteurs familiaux. De plus, Woodward *et al.* (2002) rapportent que plus les problèmes de comportements apparaissent tôt, plus les jeunes adultes sont susceptibles d'être victimes de violence dans leurs relations amoureuses. Par ailleurs, Gover, Jennings et Tewsbury (2009) concluent que les adolescentes qui ont été membres d'un « gang » au cours des 12 mois précédant l'étude sont plus susceptibles d'avoir été victimes de violence physique de la part de leur partenaire amoureux que celles qui n'ont pas fait partie d'un tel regroupement social.

1.3.4 Limites des études

Bien que les études recensées aient contribué à l'avancement des connaissances en documentant la présence d'une relation entre les problèmes de comportement et la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles, certaines limites aux plans théorique, méthodologique et conceptuelle peuvent être décelées. Les prochaines sections mettent en évidence ces lacunes et présentent les propositions élaborées dans le cadre de cette thèse pour tenter de les contrer et ainsi accroître notre compréhension des processus impliqués dans les liens à l'étude. Dans ce contexte, la théorie des problèmes de comportement (« *problem behavior theory* »), les données provenant de la littérature sur le développement des relations amoureuses normatives (non violentes) chez les jeunes, et les théories des activités routinières et des styles de vie (« *lifestyles and routine activities theories* ») sont mises de l'avant. Enfin, les objectifs de la thèse sont précisés.

1.4 La théorie des problèmes de comportement

Les chercheurs qui ont examiné la relation entre les problèmes de comportement et la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles ont, pour la

plupart, mené leurs analyses en considérant les problèmes de comportement séparément les uns des autres, comme s'ils représentaient une série de problèmes distincts (ex : Howard et Wang, 2003; Silverman *et al.*, 2001). Or, selon la théorie des problèmes de comportement (« *problem behavior theory* »; Jessor, 1991), il n'est pas optimal d'examiner séparément les différents types de problèmes de comportement chez les jeunes. Selon cette théorie, les comportements sexuels à risque, la consommation de substances psychotropes ainsi que les comportements antisociaux et délinquants représentent diverses manifestations d'un seul et unique syndrome comportemental, et donc d'un style de vie pouvant être considéré comme déviant ou risqué. En effet, tous ces comportements correspondent à ce que Jessor (1991) définit comme étant « à risque » (« *risk behaviors* »), c'est-à-dire comme « *pouvant compromettre la santé physique ainsi que le développement psychosocial des jeunes, qu'ils soient conscients ou non des risques encourus* ». Les résultats de plusieurs études indiquent que les problèmes de comportement sont fortement corrélés entre eux (Ary, Duncan, Duncan, et Hops, 1999; Donovan et Jessor, 1985; Donovan, Jessor, et Costa, 1988; French et Dishion, 2003; Jessor, Turbin, Costa, Dong, Zhang, et Wang, 2003), ce qui suggère qu'ils partageraient des causes communes.

1.4.1 Élaboration d'un concept de style de vie à risque

Compte tenu des appuis empiriques dont bénéficie la théorie des problèmes de comportement, il apparaît indiqué de créer un seul et unique facteur pouvant rendre compte des divers problèmes de comportement associés à la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses. En effet, l'interrelation entre les multiples problèmes de comportement sous-tend l'adoption par les jeunes d'un style de vie bien circonscrit. La démarche empirique proposée dans cette recherche doctorale combine donc dans une même composante, désignée sous l'appellation de « *style de vie à risque* » (« *risky lifestyle* »), les comportements sexuels à risque, la consommation

problématique de substances psychotropes et les comportements délinquants manifestés par les filles à l'adolescence.

1.5 Style de vie à risque : cadre développemental et contextuel

Bien que plusieurs études aient démontré que les filles qui manifestent davantage de problèmes de comportement durant l'enfance et/ou un style de vie à risque à l'adolescence sont plus susceptibles d'être victimes de violence dans leurs relations amoureuses (Vézina et Hébert, 2007), peu d'entre elles ont examiné cette relation à l'intérieur d'un cadre développemental et contextuel. En effet, les théories de la socialisation (ou les modèles du processus d'influence par les pairs) suggèrent que les problèmes de comportements, particulièrement à l'adolescence, sont appris et renforcés dans le groupe de pairs (Elliott et Menard, 1996). Toutefois, les caractéristiques reliées aux groupes de pairs ont été peu explorées en lien avec la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses (Barter, 2009; Olsen, Parra, et Bennett, 2010; Vézina et Hébert, 2007). Dans la littérature portant sur le développement des relations amoureuses normatives (c.-à-d., non violentes), la contribution des pairs est pourtant largement reconnue (Brown, 1999; Collins, 2003; Furman, 2002).

Selon plusieurs chercheurs, c'est au contact de leurs pairs que les jeunes discutent et établissent leurs attentes, leurs croyances et leurs limites face aux relations amoureuses (Brown, 1999; Connolly et Goldberg, 1999). C'est aussi fréquemment dans le contexte du groupe de pairs que les premières relations amoureuses se forment (Brown, 1999; Connolly, Furman, et Konarski, 2000; Dunphy, 1963, 1969). Ainsi, les caractéristiques des pairs que fréquentent les filles apparaissent comme étant des facteurs importants à considérer dans l'étude de la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses. Certains groupes de jeunes pourraient être plus enclins à tolérer et à valoriser la violence que d'autres, ce qui augmenterait le risque de victimisation des filles qui fréquentent ces réseaux sociaux. Par exemple, Arriaga et Foshee (2004) démontrent de façon prospective que les adolescentes qui

rapportaient avoir des ami(e)s qui vivaient de la violence dans leurs relations amoureuses sont davantage à risque d'être elles-mêmes victimisées six mois plus tard. De plus, dans une autre étude longitudinale portant sur un échantillon d'adolescents canadiens ($n = 621$), les jeunes qui subissaient ou infligeaient des gestes d'agression physique au sein de leur groupe de pairs sont davantage susceptibles un an plus tard d'être victimes de violence dans leurs relations amoureuses (William, Connolly, Pepler, Craig, et Laporte, 2008).

Dans la présente thèse, en plus du style de vie à risque, l'affiliation à des pairs déviants, c'est-à-dire qui présentent une conduite antisociale ou délinquante, est examinée en tant que facteur de risque associé à la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles. La supervision parentale est également incluse dans cette étude puisqu'il est généralement documenté que les pratiques parentales influencent le niveau d'affiliation avec les pairs déviants (Brown, Mounts, Lamborn, et Steinberg, 1993; Crouter et Head, 2002; Dishion et McMahon, 1998; Dishion, Patterson, Stoolmiller, et Skinner, 1991), et par conséquent le niveau de problèmes de comportement (Boislard, Poulin, Kiesner, et Dishion, 2009; Scaramella, Conger, Spoth, et Simons, 2002). À notre connaissance, cette étude est la première à considérer simultanément ces facteurs en association avec la victimisation dans le contexte des relations amoureuses. Les postulats des théories des activités routinières et des styles de vie soutiennent la pertinence d'évaluer un tel modèle.

1.6 Les théories des activités routinières et des styles de vie

En criminologie, les perspectives théoriques qui prédominent pour expliquer la victimisation de tout ordre, et non spécifiquement celle vécue dans le contexte des relations amoureuses, sont celles des activités routinières et des styles de vie (« *lifestyles and routine activities theories* »; Cohen et Felson, 1979; Hindelang, Gottfredson, et Garofalo, 1978). Selon ces théories, le risque de victimisation augmente en fonction de la présence concomitante dans le temps et l'espace : a)

d'agresseurs motivés (« *motivated offenders* »), b) d'un faible niveau de supervision (« *low guardianship* ») et c) de l'accessibilité ou de la vulnérabilité des victimes (« *suitable targets* »). Ainsi, certains milieux ou styles de vie seraient plus souvent associés à la victimisation que d'autres, notamment les « gangs » et les groupes de jeunes déviants ou délinquants (Lauritsen, Sampson, et Laub, 1991; Gover *et al.*, 2009; Nofziger, 2009). Dans cette recherche doctorale, il est postulé que plus les filles s'associent avec des pairs déviants, plus elles sont à risque d'être victimes de violence dans leurs relations amoureuses. Cette hypothèse est formulée à la lumière des éléments qui suivent.

Premièrement, le groupe de pairs déviants pourrait constituer un lieu propice à la rencontre « d'agresseurs motivés », c'est-à-dire d'individus qui, en raison de certaines prédispositions personnelles et tel que suggéré par la nature déviante de leur style de vie, seraient plus susceptibles d'adopter des comportements criminels et violents. Le groupe de pairs étant généralement le lieu où se forment les premières relations amoureuses, les filles qui sélectionnent un partenaire dans un groupe déviant risquent fort de s'engager dans une relation amoureuse avec un garçon adoptant une conduite antisociale ou délinquante. Le risque de se retrouver avec un « agresseur motivé » est ainsi augmenté. D'ailleurs, il semble que les garçons qui présentent des comportements antisociaux ont davantage tendance à être violents envers leur partenaire amoureuse que ceux qui n'en présentent pas (Capaldi et Clark, 1998; Capaldi, Dishion, Stoolmiller, et Yoerger, 2001; Magdol *et al.*, 1998). Par exemple, une étude longitudinale menée par Lavoie *et al.* (2002) auprès d'adolescents québécois ($n = 717$) révèle que les comportements antisociaux mesurés chez les garçons alors qu'ils avaient 15 ans étaient directement reliés à la perpétration de violence physique et psychologique envers leur partenaire amoureuse à l'âge de 16 et 17 ans.

Deuxièmement, les activités routinières des réseaux de pairs déviants, étant souvent de nature illégale ou peu approuvées socialement (ex. : flânerie, consommation de substances psychotropes, manifestation d'actes de délinquance,

etc.), se déroulent généralement dans des endroits isolés, avec peu supervision, et donc dans des contextes sociaux plus propices aux agressions. De plus, la supervision parentale pourrait influencer le temps d'exposition des filles à ces contextes à risque, ou tout simplement le fait qu'elles fréquentent ou non ces réseaux sociaux (Brown *et al.*, 1993). Ainsi, les filles dont les parents encadrent peu les comportements, les allées et venues ainsi que les fréquentations, sont plus susceptibles de fréquenter des groupes de pairs déviants et de passer davantage leurs temps libres avec eux, et donc d'être victimisées.

Troisièmement, plusieurs études démontrent que plus les adolescentes s'associent à des pairs déviants, plus elles sont susceptibles d'adopter elles-mêmes un style de vie à risque (Boislard *et al.*, 2009; French et Dishion, 2003; Moffitt et Caspi, 2001; Scaramella *et al.*, 2002). Tel que déjà démontré, l'adoption par les filles d'un style de vie à risque semble les rendre plus vulnérables (« *suitable targets* ») aux épisodes de violence dans leurs relations amoureuses, que ce soit de façon rapprochée dans le temps ou de façon plus distale. À cet égard, il est important de rappeler que des études ont rapporté des liens significatifs entre les problèmes de comportement durant l'enfance ou l'adolescence et la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses au début de l'âge adulte (Ehrensaft *et al.*, 2003; Magdol *et al.*, 1998; Woodward *et al.*, 2002). Toutefois, ces études n'ont pas considéré les expériences de victimisation possiblement vécues à l'adolescence, de telle sorte qu'on ignore si ces jeunes femmes sont victimisées pour la première fois au début de l'âge adulte ou si elles ne sont pas plutôt revictimisées.

1.6.1 Les expériences répétées de victimisation

Les études menées en criminologie suggèrent que les théories des activités routinières et des styles de vie peuvent expliquer le fait que certains jeunes sont plus susceptibles que d'autres de subir des expériences répétées de victimisation de l'adolescence à l'âge adulte (Lauritsen et Davis Quinet, 1995; Wittebrood et

Nieuwbeerta, 2000). Dans le domaine de la recherche portant sur la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses, les connaissances actuelles quant aux facteurs associés aux expériences répétées de victimisation dans ces périodes développementales sont encore à l'état embryonnaire (Halpern *et al.*, 2009). En conséquence, la présente thèse vise à contribuer à l'avancement des connaissances dans ce domaine en examinant si les facteurs dérivés des théories des activités routinières et des styles de vie peuvent aussi prédire les patrons longitudinaux de victimisation dans les relations amoureuses de l'adolescence au début de l'âge adulte.

1.7 Objectifs de la thèse

L'objectif principal de cette thèse est d'examiner la contribution des problèmes de comportement et de l'association avec des pairs déviants, tout en considérant la supervision parentale, dans la prédiction de la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles à l'adolescence, ainsi que des trajectoires de victimisation de l'adolescence au début de l'âge adulte. Cet objectif est examiné à partir d'un échantillon de filles recrutées alors qu'elles étaient en maternelle pour participer à un vaste projet de recherche longitudinal intitulé l'Étude longitudinale des enfants de maternelle au Québec (ÉLEMQ). Cette étude est menée par le Groupe de recherche sur l'inadaptation psychosociale chez l'enfant (GRIP) sous la direction de Richard E. Tremblay.

La présente recherche doctorale s'inscrit plus spécifiquement dans le cadre du projet *Victimization and health problems in young women* financé par Santé Canada - Programme national de recherche et de développement en santé (PNRDS) - (Hébert et Lavoie, 1999-2003). Les participantes ont été suivies pendant plus de 15 ans et ont été interrogées à l'adolescence (à 15 ans) et au début de l'âge adulte (à 21 ans) en lien avec leurs expériences de victimisation (psychologique, physique et sexuelle) vécues dans les relations amoureuses. La thèse comporte deux articles empiriques (Chapitre II et III) et se conclut par une discussion générale (Chapitre IV). Le premier article

porte sur la violence subie à l'adolescence, tandis que le second examine les patrons longitudinaux de victimisation.

Dans le premier article, la valeur prédictive d'un modèle médiateur inspiré des théories des activités routinières et des styles de vie est examinée auprès de 550 adolescentes. Le modèle postule que l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque (c.-à-d., comportements sexuels à risque, consommation problématique de substances psychotropes et comportements délinquants) médiatise la relation entre l'association avec des pairs déviants et la violence subie dans les relations amoureuses des adolescentes. Des analyses de régression logistique hiérarchique sont utilisées. Cet article est intitulé « Risky lifestyle as a mediator of the relationship between deviant peer affiliation and dating violence victimization among adolescent girls » et a été publié dans la revue *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* (Vézina, Hébert, Poulin, Lavoie, Vitaro, et Tremblay, 2011).

Dans le deuxième article, deux objectifs principaux sont visés. Le premier objectif consiste à documenter la prévalence des patrons longitudinaux de violence subie dans les relations amoureuses des filles. Les expériences de victimisation rapportées par les filles à l'âge de 15 et 21 ans sont analysées et les jeunes femmes (N = 435) sont regroupées en quatre catégories : « *n'a pas été victimisée* », « *a été victimisée exclusivement à l'adolescence* », « *a été victimisée exclusivement au début de l'âge adulte* », et « *a été revictimisée* ». Le deuxième objectif est d'examiner la contribution respective des problèmes de comportement dans l'enfance ainsi que l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque à l'adolescence pour prédire les patrons longitudinaux de victimisation. Des analyses de régression logistique multinomiale sont utilisées et la catégorie « *n'a pas été victimisée* » sert de groupe de référence. Cet article intitulé « Childhood behavior problems and adolescent risky lifestyle predictors of girls' patterns of dating victimization from adolescence to early adulthood » a été soumis pour publication à la revue *Psychology of Violence* le 16 juin 2011 (Vézina, Hébert, Poulin, Lavoie, Vitaro, et Tremblay).

CHAPITRE II

RISKY LIFESTYLE AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN DEVIANT PEER
AFFILIATION AND DATING VIOLENCE VICTIMIZATION AMONG
ADOLESCENT GIRLS
(ARTICLE 1)

Risky Lifestyle as a Mediator of the Relationship Between Deviant Peer Affiliation and Dating
Violence Victimization among Adolescent Girls

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40(7), pp. 814-824, peut être consultée à l'appendice A.

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Résumé

Peu d'études ont exploré la contribution potentielle du groupe de pairs sur la violence subie dans les relations amoureuses. Dans la présente étude, l'hypothèse selon laquelle l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque médiatise la relation entre l'association avec des pairs déviants et la violence subie dans les relations amoureuses des adolescentes a été évaluée. Le modèle médiateur proposé était inspiré des théories des activités routinières et des styles de vie. Cinq cent cinquante filles (âge moyen = 16 ans) provenant d'un échantillon plus vaste représentatif de la province de Québec (Canada) ont complété un questionnaire portant sur trois formes de victimisation dans les relations amoureuses (psychologique, physique et sexuelle). Les résultats ont révélé que les filles ayant un plus haut niveau d'association avec des pairs déviants étaient plus enclines à adopter un style de vie à risque et rapportaient davantage avoir été victimes des diverses formes de violence dans leurs relations amoureuses. Des analyses supplémentaires ont indiqué que, bien que l'affiliation avec des pairs déviants était reliée à la violence subie dans les relations amoureuses, cette association pouvait être expliquée, du moins partiellement pour la violence psychologique et complètement pour la violence physique/sexuelle, par l'adoption chez les filles d'un style de vie à risque. Les mesures préventives à venir dans le futur devraient visées comme cibles d'intervention les groupes de pairs déviants, de même que les filles qui adoptent un style de vie à risque.

Mots clés: violence dans les relations amoureuses, victimisation, adolescence, association avec des pairs déviants, style de vie à risque

Abstract

Few studies have explored the possible contribution of the peer group to dating violence victimization. The current study tested the hypothesis that a risky lifestyle would mediate the relationship between deviant peer affiliation and dating violence victimization among adolescent girls. The proposed mediation model was derived from lifestyles and routine activities theories. A sample of 550 girls (mean age = 16) drawn from a larger representative community sample in Quebec, Canada, completed a questionnaire on three forms of dating violence victimization (psychological, physical, and sexual). Results revealed that girls with a higher level of affiliation with deviant peers were more likely to endorse a risky lifestyle and reported higher rates of all forms of dating violence victimization. Further analyses showed that, while deviant peer affiliation is associated with dating violence victimization, this relationship may be explained, at least partially for psychological violence, and completely for physical/sexual violence, by the girls' own risky lifestyle. Future preventive interventions for adolescent dating violence victimization should target deviant peer groups, as well as adolescent girls who display a risky lifestyle.

Keywords: Dating violence, victimization, adolescent, deviant peer affiliation, risky lifestyle

Introduction

Dating violence victimization among adolescents is an alarming social and public health problem (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2008). Using representative national samples of American adolescents, past studies found that 29% of girls have experienced psychological violence, 12% have sustained physical violence (Halpern, Oslak, Young, Martin, & Kupper, 2001), and 4% reported having been forced by a dating partner to have sexual intercourse (Ackard, Neumark-Sztainer, & Hannan, 2003). Similar rates of psychological and physical victimization have been documented among adolescent boys (O'Leary, Smith Slep, Avery-Leaf, & Cascardi, 2008; Roberts, Klein, & Fisher, 2003). However, girls appear to be at greater risk of sexual victimization than boys are, and girls are also more likely to sustain physical injuries and to experience negative emotional effects (Barter, 2009; Jackson, 1999). The negative outcomes associated with dating victimization are quite varied and include eating disorders, posttraumatic stress disorder, depressive symptoms, and suicidal behaviors (Ackard & Neumark-Sztainer, 2002; Coker et al., 2000; Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2008). Several authors have emphasized that factors associated with adolescent dating violence may vary by gender and thus should be examined separately for boys and girls (Foshee, Benefield, Ennett, Bauman, & Suchindran, 2004; Jackson, 1999; Lewis & Fremouw, 2001). The present study examined several factors associated with girls' dating violence victimization.

According to Lewis and Fremouw (2001), identifying factors associated with dating violence is a research priority. Indeed, a better understanding of these factors is likely to offer relevant clues for the elaboration of efficient preventive interventions. Recently, Vézina and Hébert (2007) reviewed the empirical literature on factors associated with dating violence victimization among young women. One important conclusion of their review is that girls

displaying externalizing problems, labelled here as *risky behaviors*, may be more vulnerable to victimization in their first romantic relationships. Risky behavior refers to any behavior that can compromise the adolescent's physical and psychosocial health and development, such as substance use, risky sexual practices, antisocial behavior, and delinquency (Jessor, 1991). Jessor's theory (1991) argues for the necessity of considering adolescents' risky behaviors as a cluster - a "risk behavior syndrome" reflecting a deviant or risky lifestyle - because risky behaviors tend to covary and could serve the same function for youths: to be valued within their social ecology (e.g., best friends, larger peer groups). However, the majority of studies that have tested the association between risky behaviors and dating violence victimization have only considered one form of problem behavior at a time (Foshee et al., 2004; Howard & Wang, 2003).

While the association between risky behaviors and adolescent dating violence victimization among girls has been explored in past studies, the contexts in which these risky behaviors are rooted, and the association between these contexts and dating violence victimization, remains unclear. Social learning and socialization theories argue that risky behaviors, especially in adolescence, are learned and reinforced in the peer group (Elliott & Menard, 1996). Several studies have shown that deviant peer affiliation increases adolescents' involvement in risky behaviors (see Vitaro, Boivin, & Tremblay, 2007, for a review). In fact, according to the taxonomic theory (Moffitt, 1993), antisocial or risky behaviors can follow two courses: one trajectory characterized by antisocial behaviors beginning early in childhood and persisting through life, and one trajectory characterized by antisocial behaviors being limited to the developmental period of adolescence. The vast majority of antisocial girls belong to the second group (adolescence-limited: 18% versus life-course-persistent: 1%; Moffitt & Caspi, 2001). Moffitt (1993) suggested that a maturity gap, i.e., being biologically mature but not yet

considered in the society as an adult, can contribute to explaining why some girls display risky behaviors in adolescence, while they did not display problem behaviors in childhood. For these girls, risky behaviors may serve the functions of demonstrating autonomy from parents, gaining popularity among the peer group, and hastening social maturation. Thus, for the large majority of girls, their affiliation with deviant peers may precede their adoption of a risky lifestyle. Empirical support for this theory was found in studies completed by Moffitt and Caspi (2001) and by Boislard, Poulin, Kiesner and Dishion (2009), who tested two alternative structural models (socialization model and selection model) to evaluate which model can best account for the emergence of risky sexual behaviors among Canadian and Italian adolescents. Results revealed that the socialization model, in which deviant peer affiliation precedes youths' problem behavior, was the most accurate to predict the emergence of risky sexual behaviors. The deviant peer group could thus serve as a context in which risky behaviors are displayed and maintained; consequently, deviant peer affiliation is a factor that needs to be examined in link with adolescent dating violence victimization.

Peer Group and Dating Relationships

Few studies have explored the possible contribution of the peer group to dating violence victimization (Barter, 2009; Olsen, Parra, & Bennett, 2010; Vézina & Hébert, 2007). This gap in the literature may reflect the fact that investigators studying victimization in adolescence and researchers studying romantic relationships have had, up to now, little contact with each other (Feiring & Furman, 2000). Several authors have underscored the important contribution of the peer group to the development of "normative" adolescent romantic relationships (Brown, 1999; Connolly, Furman, & Konarski, 2000). According to Brown (1999), romantic relationships change in form, essence, and function across different life stages. In adolescence, they "both

shape and are shaped by the broader peer context in which they are rooted” (p. 291). Brown suggested that the norms governing romantic relationships can vary from one peer system to another. In fact, some peer groups may be more prone to tolerate and to legitimate violence in dating relationships. Data from the few longitudinal studies on this topic reveal that having friends who are experiencing dating violence in their romantic relationships may in fact be a significant predictor for dating violence victimization among adolescent girls (Arriaga & Foshee, 2004; Foshee et al., 2004). Nevertheless, according to a recent review (Olsen et al., 2010), only scant data is available on the mechanisms through which peer relationship factors operate to predict violence in dating relationships.

Lifestyles and Routine Activities Theories

Lifestyles and routine activities theories suggest that the probability of any type of victimization increases in an environment where there is a convergence in time and space of motivated offenders, suitable targets, and low guardianship, such as in adolescents’ delinquent or deviant groups (Lauritsen, Sampson, & Laub, 1991). Criminological research focusing on lifestyle-routine activities theories has identified deviant peer group affiliation and risky lifestyle as important factors in association with various forms of victimization (e.g., violent victimization at school: Nofziger, 2009). However, to our knowledge, no study has yet considered these two factors in relationship to adolescent dating violence victimization. Lifestyle-routine activities theories were previously used in the field of research on dating violence, but in regard to other social contexts than deviant peer group. For example, Gover (2004) found that living in a nuclear family and attending church several times a month reduce the likelihood that girls would adopt risky behaviors and thus decrease the odds of dating violence victimization, as guardianship is expected to be higher with two parents at home, and the risk of affiliating with motivated

offenders and delinquent peers is expected to be lower in religious institutions. Relying on lifestyles and routine activities theories offers a promising framework to document the factors associated with victimization in the context of early romantic relationships. Indeed, as Gover (2004) suggested, these theories may help us to better understand the social processes through which dating violence victimization is likely to occur.

The Current Study

The aim of the current study is to examine the contribution of the peer group to dating violence victimization among adolescent girls. While past studies have documented an association between risky behaviors and dating violence victimization, the potential contribution of deviant peer affiliation has never been considered in this context. Thus, the results of this study are likely to contribute to the literature and offer relevant practical implications for practitioners who are designing prevention programs for youth.

More specifically, the purpose of this study is to evaluate a model derived from lifestyles and routine activities theories (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Hindelang, Gottfredson, & Garofalo, 1978) taking into account girls' deviant peer affiliation and risky behaviors. Following Jessor's theory, a construct of "risky lifestyle", combining risky sexual practices, drug and alcohol problems, and delinquent behaviors, was used. Our model was tested using three forms of dating violence victimization (psychological, physical, and sexual), which represents a methodological strength over past studies that have only considered physical violence. Based on both theoretical models and recent empirical findings, this study postulates risky lifestyle as a mediator of the link between deviant peer affiliation and dating violence victimization (psychological, physical and sexual). Thus, we expected that girls who have a stronger tendency to affiliate with deviant peers are more likely to be victimized in their dating relationships than girls who do not tend to

associate with deviant peers. In fact, we hypothesized that a higher level of affiliation with deviant peers is associated with a higher level of risky lifestyle, which, in turn, is linked to a higher probability for girls of being victimized in their dating relationships. Moreover, as several studies have highlighted the important contribution of the family to the development of a risky lifestyle in adolescence and to adolescents' deviant peer affiliation (see Boyer, 2006 for a review and Hovee et al., 2009 for a meta-analysis on the relationship between parenting and delinquency), parental monitoring was used as a control variable in this study, as well as aggression and disruptiveness in early childhood.

Method

Participants

Participants were drawn from a larger representative community sample of French-speaking kindergarten children in Quebec, Canada, during the 1986-1987 school years. Two thousand children were selected randomly (946 girls) and 1017 additional participants were retained to compose an at-risk sample (444 girls). These children were considered at risk for later adjustment problems because they scored at or above the 80th percentile (using sex-specific cutoff scores) on parent or teacher reports of the Social Behavior Questionnaire disruptive behaviors scale (SBQ; Tremblay et al., 1991). When they reached 15 years old, between 1995 and 1997, 1808 of them (929 girls) accepted to be interviewed and to complete questionnaires. The present analyses are based on data available for 550 girls who had a dating partner during at least two weeks in the past year and who answered a questionnaire on dating violence victimization. Almost a third of the girls were from the at-risk sample ($n = 174$; 31.5%). Girls were predominantly Caucasians, they were on average 16 years old ($M = 15.75$; $SD = .48$), and the majority were in Grades 9 or 10 (respectively 25% and 53%). Sixty-four percent of them

lived in an intact family, 23% in a single-parent family, 12% in a blended family, and 1% lived in other situations (e.g., with their grand-parents, under the child protection service). Girls' socioeconomic status (SES) was average according to Blishen, Carroll, and Moore's (1987) occupational prestige scale ($M = 42.29$; $SD = 9.53$, based on data collected from 6 to 12 years old).

Procedure

When girls were in kindergarten, a first contact with their family was established through a letter sent to parents to invite them to participate in the study. Questionnaires were then sent to the schools, and teachers were in charge of sending them to the parents (for the majority, to the mother). Written consent was required from the parent and the teacher. When girls reached age 15, a letter describing the study procedures and aims was sent to them at home. Research assistants then telephoned to schedule interviews for those who agreed to participate in the study. Before the interview, girls and their parents signed a written consent form. Interviews occurred in the girls' home, and participants received monetary compensation (girls received \$10 and parents received \$15). The study received internal review board approval from the University of Montreal.

Measures

Dating Violence Victimization

Girls who had been dating for at least two weeks during the past year completed a questionnaire on dating violence. The questionnaire covered psychological (six items), physical (seven items), and sexual violence (six items). If girls had more than one relationship in the past 12 months, they were asked to refer to the most difficult relationship to complete the questionnaire. Girls had to indicate how often during the past year, on a 4-point scale (0 = never;

1 = once or twice; 2 = 3 to 10 times; 3 = more than 11 times), they had experienced each of the behaviors presented. This version of the questionnaire was recently used by Hébert, Lavoie, Vitaro, McDuff, and Tremblay (2008).

Psychological dating violence victimization. Items on psychological violence were adapted from the Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory (PMWI; Kasian & Painter, 1992). Girls were asked to report how often their boyfriend had prevented them from seeing or speaking to friends, humiliated them or “put them down”, accused them of cheating on him, controlled their schedule and demanded a report on what they have been doing, acted cold or indifferent with them, or ordered them around. Results revealed an adequate internal consistency for this subscale ($\alpha = .73$). The six items were summed to obtain a total score. Then, the total score was dichotomized: all girls with a total score equal to or above 3 were assigned a score of 1, which meant that they reported sustaining multiple forms and/or repetitive acts of psychological violence; otherwise a score of 0 was assigned. Using this criterion, 154 girls (28%) reported having experienced psychological violence. The majority of these girls (95 out of 154 = 61.7%) obtained a score equal to 3 or 4.

Physical/sexual dating violence victimization. Items on physical violence were adapted from the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS; Straus, 1979) and items on sexual violence from the Sexual Experience Survey (SES; Koss & Gidycz, 1985). For the physical subscale, girls were asked to report how often their boyfriend had thrown an object at them, pushed or shoved them, slapped them, kicked them, hit them with an object, beaten them up, or threatened them with a knife. For the sexual subscale, girls were asked to report how often their boyfriend used arguments and pressure, used alcohol or drugs, or threatened them to or used some degree of physical force to incite them to have sexual contacts (e.g., kissing, petting or fondling) or to have

a complete sexual intercourse. For the physical and sexual violence subscales, the total scores were dichotomized. All girls who reported sustaining at least one act of violence from a dating partner were then assigned a score of 1; else a score of 0 was assigned. Using this criterion, 53 girls (9.6%) reported having experienced physical violence and 55 girls (10%) reported having experienced sexual violence. Of those reporting physical violence, the majority (32 girls out of 53 = 60.4%) reported one or two episodes of victimization, while more than half of the girls who were victims of sexual violence reported more than three incidents of victimization (30 out of 55 = 54.6%).

Silverman, Raj, Mucci, and Hathaway (2001) emphasized that distinguishing between physical and sexual dating violence victimization may not be helpful in documenting factors associated with such experiences considering that sexual violence is less likely to occur in the absence of physical violence for adolescent girls. Thus, they conclude that a composite score offers a more informative approach when studying sexual dating violence victimization among adolescents. Following this rationale, a composite score of physical and sexual dating violence victimization was used for the purpose of the current study. Results revealed an adequate internal consistency of this composite score ($\alpha = .80$). Eighty-seven girls (15.8%) reported having experienced physical violence only, sexual violence only, or physical and sexual violence.

Deviant Peer Affiliation

To measure girls' deviant peer affiliation, a nine-item composite score was used. Girls were asked to report whether or not their best female friend had ever ran away from home, been expelled or suspended from school, and been arrested by the police. They were also asked whether they had ever been part of a gang that committed deviant acts. In addition, girls were asked how many of their friends had ever been arrested, smoked cigarettes, and used drugs and

alcohol, on a scale ranging from 0 (“none”) to 3 (“almost all of them” or “all of them”). Responses to the nine items were standardized (transformed into z-scores), and a mean score was computed ($\alpha = .70$). A higher score indicates a higher level of deviant peer affiliation.

Risky Lifestyle

A composite score of risky lifestyle referring to three forms of risky behavior (risky sexual behavior, drug and alcohol problems, and delinquent behavior) was used. For risky sexual behavior, girls were asked to report their age at first sexual intercourse (0 = never had sexual intercourse; 1 = had first sexual intercourse at 14 years old or later; 2 = had first sexual intercourse before the age of 14), their lifetime number of sexual partners, the number of “one night stands” they had during the past 12 months (0 = none; 1 = one or two; 2 = from 3 to 10; 3 = 11 and more) and the frequency at which they used condom (0 = never had sexual intercourse; 1 = always use condom; 2 = sometimes use condom; 3 = never use condom).

Alcohol and drug problems were measured using a 12-item scale from the work of Zoccolillo, Vitaro, and Tremblay (1999). Girls who had used alcohol or drugs more than five times in their lifetime were asked to report their substance use problems on a scale ranging from 1 (“never”) to 4 (“many times”). Each of the following problems was included in two questions (one pertaining to alcohol use, and the other to drug use): (a) went to school intoxicated, (b) got into fights while intoxicated, (c) drove a motor vehicle while intoxicated, (d) got into trouble with the police because of drugs or alcohol, (e) engaged in sporting activities while intoxicated, and (f) used drugs or alcohol before noon. Girls who had not used substances more than five times received a score of zero on either alcohol or/and on drug problems items.

Delinquent behaviors were assessed using 17-items from the conduct disorder scale of the French version of the Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children-2.25 (DISC-2.25; Breton,

Bergeron, Valla, Berthiaume, & St-Georges, 1998). Girls were asked to report whether or not they had adopted delinquent behaviors in the past 12 months, including status offenses (e.g., ran away from home, had been expelled from school), property offenses (e.g., had stolen something in a store, had stolen from their parents), and violent offenses (e.g., had participated in a fight, engaged in acts of cruelty). Finally, to generate a composite score of risky lifestyle for each girl, the scores obtained for risky sexual behavior, alcohol and drug problems, and delinquent behaviors were standardized and then combined into a mean score (correlations from .41 to .53, $p < .001$; $\alpha = .73$).

Aggression-Disruptiveness in Kindergarten

At the end of kindergarten, teachers completed the Social Behavior Questionnaire (SBQ; Tremblay et al., 1991) for each girl. For the purpose of the present study, the 13-item aggression-disruptiveness scale was used. Adequate psychometric properties of the SBQ have been well established (Tremblay, Vitaro, Gagnon, Piché, & Royer, 1992). Each item (e.g., is restless; is disobedient; blames others; kicks, bites, or hits other children) was rated on a 3-point scale ranging from 0 (“does not apply”) to 2 (“applies often”). A mean score was computed ($\alpha = .91$), and a higher score indicates a higher level of aggression and disruptiveness in kindergarten.

Parental Monitoring

To measure parental monitoring, a six-item composite score was created. Girls were asked to report how many times do their parents know with whom they are when they are not at home, where they are, at what time they are coming back home and on what they are spending their time when they are at home, on a 3-point scale (1 = almost never; 2 = sometimes; 3 = almost always). Last, they had to report how important it was for their parents to know about their activities (1 = not important; 2 = a little important; 3 = very important). The six items were

standardized, and the mean score was computed ($\alpha = .66$). A higher score indicates a higher level of parental monitoring.

Statistical Analysis

First, following the guidelines provided by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), transformations were performed to achieve normality of scores for the following variables: parental monitoring (reflect and square root), deviant peer affiliation (square root), and risky lifestyle (logarithm). Next, descriptive statistics and bivariate analyses (correlations) were conducted to assess the relationships between the study variables. No statistically significant relationships were found between sociodemographic variables and dating violence victimization scores. SES and family structure were thus not used as control variables in the main analyses (regression analyses). Finally, to evaluate whether risky lifestyle mediates the link between deviant peer affiliation and dating violence victimization (psychological and physical/sexual), a series of logistic regression analyses were conducted based on the procedures outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986). Control variables (aggression-disruptiveness in kindergarten and parental monitoring) were included in all regression analyses. All analyses were performed using SPSS 16.

Results

Descriptive Analyses

Table 1 displays the frequencies, means, standard deviations, and correlations among the study variables. As hypothesized, both measures of dating violence victimization were associated with a higher score of affiliation with deviant peers and risky lifestyle, but only psychological victimization was associated with a lower level of parental monitoring. Not surprisingly, the correlation between deviant peer affiliation and risky lifestyle was strong. Psychological and

physical/sexual dating violence victimization were moderately correlated, suggesting a certain degree of co-occurrence of victimization experiences.

Mediation Analyses

Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure stipulates that three conditions must be fulfilled to establish mediation. First, the predictor (deviant peer affiliation) must be correlated with the outcome (dating violence victimization). This step establishes that there is an effect that may be mediated, and logistic regression analyses were performed to test this assumption. Specifically, deviant peer affiliation and the control variables were regressed on each of the dating violence victimization subscales (Model 1 in Tables 2 and 3). The second condition proposed by Baron and Kenny is that the predictor (deviant peer affiliation) must be correlated with the mediator (risky lifestyle). A linear regression was performed and showed that deviant peer affiliation was statistically associated with risky lifestyle ($\beta = .61, p < .001$). The third condition is that the mediator must affect the outcome, when controlling for the predictor in a regression analysis. To test this condition, all the variables were then regressed on each of the dating violence victimization subscales (Model 2 in Tables 2 and 3). Finally, Sobel's test (1982) of the indirect effect was conducted to assess if deviant peer affiliation predicted dating violence victimization, through the influence of risky lifestyle.

Predicting psychological dating violence victimization. Table 2 presents the results from the first and second models that examined the direct and indirect effects of deviant peer affiliation on psychological dating violence victimization. Model 1 showed that a 1-point increase in deviant peer affiliation was associated with a 2.06 increase in the odds of being victim of psychological victimization. None of the control variables was found to be statistically associated with psychological victimization. When risky lifestyle was included in a final model

(Model 2), the effect of deviant peer affiliation on psychological dating violence victimization was reduced, but remained statistically significant (odds ratio = 1.47, 95% confidence interval = 1.07 - 2.03). A 1-point increase in risky lifestyle was associated with a 2.11 increase in the odds of being a victim of psychological victimization, controlling for deviant peer affiliation. These results suggested that the link between deviant peer affiliation and psychological victimization was partially mediated by risky lifestyle. Sobel's test (1982) of the indirect effect was statistically significant ($z = 3.39, p < .001$). The final model was statistically reliable at $\chi^2(4, 541) = 51.47, p < .001$ and together, deviant peer affiliation and risky lifestyle accounted for 13% of the variance in girls' psychological dating violence victimization¹.

Predicting physical/sexual dating violence victimization. Table 3 presents logistic regression results examining physical/sexual dating violence victimization. Model 1 showed that a 1-point increase in deviant peer affiliation was associated with a 1.71 increase in the odds of being victim of physical/sexual victimization. None of the control variables was found to be statistically associated with this outcome. With the addition of risky lifestyle in the model (Model 2), the effect of deviant peer affiliation on physical/sexual dating violence victimization decreased and failed to reach statistical significance. However, a higher score on risky lifestyle was associated with a higher risk of being a victim of physical/sexual victimization, controlling for deviant peer affiliation (odds ratio = 1.83, 95% confidence interval = 1.09 - 3.07). These results suggested that the link between deviant peer affiliation and physical/sexual victimization was totally mediated by risky lifestyle. Sobel's test (1982) of the indirect effect was statistically significant ($z = 2.53, p < .05$), supporting the proposed mediational effect. The final model was

¹ Nonparametric bootstrapping analyses were performed and produce the same results.

statistically reliable at $\chi^2(4, 541) = 19.84, p < .01$, and together deviant peer affiliation and risky lifestyle accounted for 6% of the variance in girls' physical/sexual dating violence victimization².

Discussion

For most youth, the first romantic relationships are central in their life and positively contribute to the normative developmental tasks they are facing during adolescence (Furman & Shaffer, 2003). Unfortunately, for a number of teenagers their very first romantic relationships are instead tainted by violence and linked with a host of negative experiences and long-lasting repercussions. Up to now, few studies have relied on a developmental perspective to better understand the risk factors linked to adolescent dating violence. For example, while the crucial role of peers in the emergence of first romantic relationships has been acknowledged in the scholarly literature on adolescent development, few empirical reports have explored the influence of peers as a possible factor associated with dating violence victimization. This study aimed to document the links between deviant peer affiliation, risky lifestyle and dating violence victimization using a large community sample of adolescent girls. Considering the possible role of deviant peer groups and risky lifestyle in dating violence victimization may offer insightful clues as for the identification of vulnerable youths as well as orient future prevention initiatives.

In this study, almost 30% of girls reported having sustained psychological dating violence within the past year and approximately 1 in 5 girls (15.8%) reported having been physically and/or sexually victimized. These prevalence rates compare with those reported in prior studies of adolescent dating violence victimization (Halpern et al., 2001; Howard & Wang, 2003; Silverman et al., 2001). This study examined risky lifestyle as a possible mediator of the relationship between deviant peer affiliation and dating violence victimization (psychological

²Nonparametric bootstrapping analyses were performed and produce the same results.

and physical/sexual) among adolescent girls. The proposed model was derived from lifestyle-routine activities theories and the statistical analyses included parental monitoring and aggression-disruptiveness in childhood as control variables. Our model was tested using logistic regression analyses, which provided support for our hypotheses concerning both psychological and physical/sexual dating violence victimization.

As predicted, our data revealed a significant link between deviant peer affiliation and dating violence victimization. The girls who reported a higher level of affiliation with deviant peers were more likely to be victimized in their dating relationships, but this association was mediated by the girls' own risky lifestyle. Partial mediation was found when predicting psychological dating violence victimization, as affiliation with deviant peers was associated with psychological violence both directly and indirectly, through risky lifestyle. For physical/sexual dating violence victimization, a complete mediational model was supported. Results showed that a higher level of affiliation with deviant peers was associated with a higher level of risky lifestyle, which, in turn, was linked to a higher probability for girls of being physically and/or sexually victimized.

Our results are consistent with past research linking risky behaviors (e.g., antisocial behavior, substance use, risky sexual practices, and delinquency) and dating violence victimization. In this study, however, the concept of "risky lifestyle" was used in line with lifestyle-routine activities theories (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Hindelang, Gottfredson, & Garofalo, 1978) and Jessor's (1991) theory that suggests the clustering of adolescents' risk behaviors. Multiple forms of risk behaviors, such as risky sexual practices, alcohol and drug problems, and delinquency, were thus included in our analyses to form a unique risky lifestyle composite score. Using a nationally representative sample of U.S. adolescent girls in Grades 9 through 12,

Howard and Wang (2003) found an at-risk profile among adolescent girls who were victims of physical dating violence. In fact, these girls engaged in a pattern of risky practices (violent behaviors, illicit substance use, and risky sexual behavior) that supported the concept of the clustering of risk behaviors proposed by Jessor's work (1991). Recently, Eaton, Davis, Barrios, Brener, and Noonan (2007) have also highlighted the importance of considering the co-occurrence of risk behaviors in the prediction of adolescent dating violence victimization. In fact, the authors found that the odds of dating violence victimization among girls went up as the number of their risk behaviors increased.

In this study, risky lifestyle, as expected, was strongly and positively linked to deviant peer affiliation. This finding is consistent with past studies that showed that adolescent girls are more likely to engage in risky behaviors if they affiliate with deviant peers (French & Dishion, 2003; Moffit & Caspi, 2001; Scaramella, Conger, Spoth, & Simons, 2002). In the current study, we linked deviant peer context to lifestyle-routine activities theories and we found some support, like Gover (2004) did, for the relevance of these frameworks to gain a better understanding of dating violence victimization. Our findings suggest that, while deviant peer affiliation is associated with dating violence victimization, this relationship may be explained, at least partially for psychological violence, and completely for physical/sexual violence, by the girls' own risky lifestyle. Indeed, spending time with deviant peers may offer social opportunities for girls to participate in leisure activities without appropriate supervision (e.g., parties, park loitering, isolated settings), which are characterized by low levels of guardianship, and may also increase their involvement in routine activities that are characterized by the adoption of risky behaviors. In addition, the routine activities taking place in deviant groups (e.g., using substances, partying) may increase the probability that girls meet and bond with antisocial boys, which

would in turn increase the odds that they engage in a dating relationship with these boys. Being in a dating relationship with an antisocial partner would be equivalent to dating a motivated offender, thus increasing the likelihood of being victimized in the context of a dating relationship. In fact, prior studies have found that antisocial boys tend to be more violent with their romantic partners than normative boys (Capaldi & Clark, 1998; Capaldi, Dishion, Stoolmiller, & Yoerger, 2001).

Study Limitations

The findings of the current study should be interpreted in light of the following limitations. First, we inferred causal links among our variables; however, our data was cross-sectional and correlational. Consequently, we cannot confirm the chronology involved in the relationship between deviant peer affiliation, risky lifestyle, and dating violence victimization. Although we described deviant peer affiliation and risky lifestyle as predictors for dating violence victimization, it is also possible that they are outcomes of that victimization. Longitudinal research is needed to clarify the temporality of these factors.

Second, our sample was predominantly Caucasian and middle-class, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population of adolescent girls. Nevertheless, the girls who participated in the study were drawn from a community sample, which allowed us to include in our study some girls who may be at greater risk of experiencing dating violence (e.g., dropout girls; Vézina & Hébert, 2007) and who could not have been reached with a school-based sample, which represent a major improvement over past studies relying on school samples.

Third, girls' reports of peers' deviancy and parental monitoring may be influenced by response bias. Future work would thus benefit from gathering data directly from peers and parents. In addition, future studies may need to document more thoroughly the friendship

network and its relationship to risky lifestyle and dating violence victimization. For example, Lacasse, Purdy, and Mendelson (2003) showed that girls who have more male friends are more likely to experience moderate and severe potentially offensive sexual behaviors than girls who have fewer male friends. Thus, the gender composition of the peer group may be a relevant factor to explore in future studies.

Finally, although our model was empirically supported, the variables considered in this study explained only 13% of the variance in psychological dating violence victimization and 6% of the variance in physical/sexual victimization. While these proportions of explained variance are similar to those reported in prior studies in the field of adolescent dating violence (Eaton et al., 2007; Wekerle et al., 2001), they are still low. This suggests that other variables that were not explored in the present study may exert a significant influence.

Practical Implications of this Study

Despite the limitations of this study, our results have several practical implications. First, our findings bring some support to Ehrensaft's (2008) recommendation to link the research programs on partner violence and on the development of youth antisocial behavior. Ehrensaft suggested that programs for the prevention of partner violence should be inspired by research on the prevention of antisocial behavior. She highlighted that one of the most important contributions made by this latter field of research is the shift from universal prevention strategies to intervention strategies that fit varying levels of risk (e.g., *Adolescent Transitions Program*; Dishion & Kavanagh, 2003). Vézina and Hébert (2007) have also underlined the relevance of targeting subgroups of adolescents who appear to be at greater risk of being victimized in their dating relationships. In accordance with several studies (Foshee, et al., 2004; Howard & Wang,

2003; Silverman et al., 2001), our results suggest that adolescent girls who engage in a risky lifestyle should be targeted by preventive interventions for dating violence.

Another noteworthy implication of this work is that our findings indicate that peer ecologies need to be considered in the elaboration of preventive measures for violence in romantic relationships among adolescent girls. Our findings thus support the ideas proposed by Arriaga and Foshee (2004), who recommended specifically for adolescent girls that prevention strategies take into account the potential influence of friends. Peers contribute to the formation of youths' romantic norms and expectations because they can play the role of model, confidant, and counsellor, and also because being accepted by peers is a major preoccupation for adolescents. Deviant peer groups should then be considered as an interesting target population for the implementation of preventive measures.

Conclusion

This study provided support for a model in which risky lifestyle - risky sexual behavior, alcohol and drug problems, and delinquency - partially mediated the relationship between deviant peer affiliation and dating violence victimization when psychological victimization was the outcome, and completely mediated this relationship when the outcome was physical/sexual victimization. Future studies on adolescent dating violence should adopt a developmental framework and include peer contexts as an attempt to better understand and prevent this disquieting phenomenon. Our findings suggest that deviant peers may play a role in dating violence victimization among adolescent girls and, consequently, that prevention and intervention efforts should target deviant peer groups, as well as adolescent girls who display a risky lifestyle.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among the Variables

Variables	% (N) or M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Aggression-disruptiveness in kindergarten	3.21 (3.77)	-					
2. Parental monitoring	2.94 (.57)	.01	-				
3. Deviant peer affiliation	2.71 (.81)	-.01	.26***	-			
4. Risky Lifestyle	1.71 (.62)	.03	.27***	.64***	-		
5. Psychological dating violence victimization	28% (154)	-.04	.12**	.26***	.28***	-	
6. Physical/Sexual dating violence victimization	15.8% (87)	.01	.04	.17***	.20**	.38***	-

** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 2

Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Psychological Dating Violence Victimization ($N=541$)

	Model 1				Model 2					
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>OR</i>	95% <i>CI</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>OR</i>	95% <i>CI</i>
Aggression-disruptiveness in kindergarten	-.03	.03	.92	.92	.92-1.03	-.03	.03	1.14	.97	.92-1.03
Parental monitoring	.18	.18	1.10	1.21	.85-1.71	.11	.18	.37	1.12	.78-1.60
Deviant peer affiliation	.72	.13	29.17	2.06	1.59-2.68***	.39	.16	5.56	1.47	1.07-2.03*
Risky lifestyle						.75	.22	11.56	2.11	1.37-3.24**
Nagelkerke R^2				.10					.13	
Model χ^2				39.44***					51.47***	

W Wald statistic, *OR* odds ratio, *CI* confidence interval

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Table 3

Summary of Logistic Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Physical/Sexual Dating Violence Victimization (N=541)

	Model 1				Model 2					
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>OR</i>	95% <i>CI</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>OR</i>	95% <i>CI</i>
Aggression-disruptiveness in kindergarten	.00	.03	.01	1.00	.94-1.07	.00	.03	.00	1.00	.94-1.07
Parental monitoring	.43	.76	.33	1.54	.35-6.83	.22	.77	.08	1.25	.28-5.63
Deviant peer affiliation	.53	.16	11.57	1.71	1.25-2.32**	.25	.20	1.66	1.29	.88-1.90
Risky lifestyle						.60	.26	5.20	1.83	1.09-3.07*
Nagelkerke R^2				.05					.06	
Model χ^2				14.05**					19.84**	

W Wald statistic, *OR* odds ratio, *CI* confidence interval.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

CHAPITRE III

CHILDHOOD BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS AND ADOLESCENT RISKY
LIFESTYLE AS PREDICTORS OF GIRLS' PATTERNS OF DATING
VICTIMIZATION FROM ADOLESCENCE TO EARLY ADULTHOOD

(ARTICLE 2)

Childhood Behavior Problems and Adolescent Risky Lifestyle as Predictors of Girls' Patterns of
Dating Victimization from Adolescence to Early Adulthood

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Résumé

Objectifs: Documenter la prévalence des patrons de victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles de l'adolescence au début de l'âge adulte et examiner, selon les théories des activités routinières et des styles de vie, les associations entre ces patrons de victimisation et les problèmes de comportement manifestés dans l'enfance ainsi que l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque à l'adolescence. *Méthodologie* : Quatre cent trente-cinq filles provenant d'un échantillon tiré de la communauté du Québec (Canada) ont complété un questionnaire portant sur trois formes de victimisation dans les relations amoureuses (psychologique, physique et sexuelle) à l'adolescence (à l'âge de 15 ans) et au début de l'âge adulte (à l'âge de 21 ans). *Résultats* : La victimisation psychologique était limitée à la période de l'adolescence dans 18,4% des cas; elle était limitée au début de l'âge adulte dans 26,4% des cas; et 9,4% des filles ont été revictimisées. La victimisation physique/sexuelle était limitée à la période de l'adolescence dans 14,3% des cas; elle était limitée au début de l'âge adulte dans 12,6% des cas; et 2,5% des filles ont été revictimisées. Des analyses de régression logistique multinomiale ont révélé que les problèmes de comportement dans l'enfance ainsi que l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque à l'adolescence étaient associés à des probabilités plus élevées pour les filles d'être victimisées (psychologiquement et/ou physiquement/sexuellement) à l'adolescence ou au début de l'âge adulte, ou lors de ces deux périodes développementales. *Conclusions* : Prévenir et traiter, d'une part, les problèmes de comportement émergeant dans l'enfance et, d'autre part, l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque à l'adolescence simultanément avec la violence dans les relations amoureuses, pourraient constituer des éléments clés à considérer dans la prévention de la violence dans les relations amoureuses.

Mots clés: violence dans les relations amoureuses, victimisation, étude longitudinale,

adolescentes, jeunes femmes

Abstract

Objective: To document the prevalence of various patterns of dating victimization among girls from adolescence to early adulthood, and to examine, within the framework of lifestyle/routine activities theories, associations between such patterns and childhood problem behaviors and adolescent risky lifestyle. *Method:* A sample of 435 female participants drawn from a larger representative community sample in Quebec, Canada, completed a questionnaire on three forms of dating victimization (psychological, physical, and sexual) in adolescence (age 15) and early adulthood (age 21). *Results:* Psychological victimization was limited to the adolescent period in 18.4% of cases; it was limited to early adulthood in 26.4% of cases; and 9.4% of girls were revictimized by early adulthood. Physical/sexual victimization was limited to the adolescent period in 14.3% of cases; it was limited to early adulthood in 12.6% of cases; and 2.5% of girls were revictimized by early adulthood. Multinomial logistic regression analyses revealed that childhood behavior problems and adolescent risky lifestyle were associated with an increased risk for girls of being victimized (psychologically and/or physically/sexually) in their dating relationships either in adolescence or early adulthood, or at both developmental periods. *Conclusions:* Preventing and treating behavior problems and intervening on risky lifestyle and on dating violence concurrently may be key factors in the prevention of victimization in the context of romantic relationships.

Keywords: dating violence, victimization, longitudinal study, adolescent girls, young women

Victimization in women's dating relationships is a disquieting public health problem experienced by a significant number of females from adolescence onward. In studies using nationally representative samples, approximately 10% of adolescent girls reported physical victimization, 7% reported sexual victimization, and 29% reported psychological victimization from a dating partner (Eaton, Davis, Barrios, Brener, & Noonan, 2007; Halpern, Oslak, Young, Martin, & Kupper, 2001; Howard & Wang, 2003; Raghavan, Bogart, Elliott, Vestal, & Schuster, 2004). Adolescent dating victimization is associated with serious negative outcomes, including illicit substance use, depressive symptoms, and suicidal attempts (Ackard, Eisenberg, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2007; Roberts, Klein, & Fisher, 2003). It is also related to an increased risk of revictimization in subsequent romantic relationships. In fact, recent data have shown that dating victimization in adolescence is a significant predictor of dating victimization in young adulthood (Lehrer, Buka, Gortmaker, & Shrier, 2006; Spriggs, Halpern, & Martin, 2009). However, very few studies have used a longitudinal design to examine patterns of dating victimization among girls from adolescence to early adulthood.

To our knowledge, the only published study focusing on longitudinal patterns of dating victimization from adolescence to young adulthood was conducted by Halpern, Spriggs, Martin, and Kupper (2009). Using a subset of the data available from the Add Health survey--a longitudinal, nationally representative sample of U.S. adolescents in grades 7-12 recruited in the 1994-1995 school year--they found that 44% of girls ($n = 1361$) reported dating victimization by young adulthood. Nine percent experienced dating victimization only in adolescence, 27.4% experienced victimization only in young adulthood, while 7.8% showed persistent victimization across both developmental periods. These results suggest that a subgroup of young females may experience continued victimization in the context of romantic relationships. While providing relevant data, one shortcoming of this study is that physical victimization was the only form of

dating violence measured in adolescence, and only one item evaluating sexual victimization was added at the young adult survey. Another limitation of this study is that psychological dating victimization was not examined prospectively from adolescence to early adulthood. In fact, psychological violence appears to be particularly relevant to examine in first dating relationships and may be as detrimental to adolescent well-being as physical victimization (Jouriles, Garrido, Rosenfield, & McDonald, 2009). In addition, psychological victimization often co-occurs with other forms of victimization and can even predict their occurrence (O'Leary & Smith Slep, 2003; Sears, Byers, & Price, 2007). To address the limitations of prior research, this study explored the presence of psychological, physical and sexual victimization in a community-based sample of girls who were followed from adolescence through early adulthood.

Halpern et al. (2009) have examined associations between longitudinal patterns of dating victimization and selected sociodemographic, individual, experiential, and partnership characteristics. Their results showed that multiple romantic partners and early sexual debut (before age 16) were the most consistent predictors of dating victimization, its timing of onset, and its persistence from adolescence to young adulthood. According to Jessor's problem behavior theory (Jessor, 1991), precocious sexual initiation and multiple dating partners may be one facet of a larger generalized pattern of risky behaviors. Specifically, Jessor's model posits that adolescent risky behaviors (e.g., substance use, risky sexual practices, antisocial behavior, delinquency) tend to cluster together, reflecting a deviant lifestyle, or labelled here as "*risky lifestyle*", and thus should be addressed as a single behavioral syndrome. Empirical evidence supports the hypothesis of the co-occurrence of multiple risky behaviors among adolescents (Ary, Duncan, Duncan, & Hops, 1999). However, Halpern et al. have not considered other forms of risky behaviors in association with longitudinal patterns of dating victimization.

Childhood Behavior Problems, Risky Lifestyle and Girls' Dating Victimization

In a review of 61 empirical studies examining risk factors for dating victimization among adolescent girls and young women, Vézina and Hébert (2007) reported significant associations between dating victimization and antisocial and delinquent behaviors, substance use, and risky sexual practices. The majority of these studies used cross-sectional designs and examined risky behaviors and dating victimization in adolescence. However, some longitudinal studies also showed that childhood and adolescent behavior problems may act as predictors of dating victimization in young adulthood. For example, Magdol, Moffitt, Caspi, and Silva (1998) found that behavior problems during childhood and adolescence were the most consistent predictors of dating victimization among young women, after controlling for socioeconomic resources, family relations, and educational achievement. Vézina and Hébert concluded that a risky lifestyle seems to play a major role in girls' experience of dating victimization. Still, considering that most of the studies they reviewed focused on factors associated with the onset of girls' dating victimization in adolescence or young adulthood, we know little about the relationship between adolescent risky lifestyle or behavior problems during childhood and the continuation of victimization from adolescence through early adulthood. Therefore, this study investigated the potential contribution of childhood behavior problems and adolescent risky lifestyle as predictors of longitudinal patterns of dating victimization among girls. We examined these associations within the framework of lifestyle/routine activities theories (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Hindelang, Gottfredson, & Garofalo, 1978).

Lifestyle/Routine Activities Theories

Criminological research, using lifestyle/routine activities theories, has also widely and consistently found significant associations between risky lifestyle and adolescent victimization (Chen, 2009). These theories suggest that victimization of any sort (e.g., robbery, assault, larceny)

is more likely to occur when there is a convergence in time and space of motivated offenders, suitable targets, and low guardianship. Some lifestyle/activity patterns and certain social contexts may actually increase the likelihood of victimization. For example, as suggested by the studies reviewed by Chen (2009), adopting risky behaviors, associating with deviant peers, and engaging in unsupervised activities directly increase the probability of victimization. A higher risk of repeated victimization from adolescence to adulthood has been empirically supported within this conceptual framework (Wittebrood & Nieuwbeerta, 2000).

Vézina and her colleagues (2011) found empirical support for a model derived from lifestyles/routine activities theories to predict adolescent girls' dating victimization. Following Jessor's theory (1991), they used in their analyses a construct of risky lifestyle that combined risky sexual practices, problematic substance use, and delinquent behaviors. Their results showed that after controlling for behavior problems in childhood and parental monitoring in adolescence, risky lifestyle partially mediated the relationship between deviant peer affiliation and dating victimization when psychological violence was the outcome, and completely mediated this relationship when the outcome was physical and/or sexual violence. Nonetheless, this study was limited by its cross-sectional data, so we do not know what could be the influence of these factors on the longitudinal course of dating victimization. What we do know, however, is that girls who were disruptive in childhood (Fontaine et al., 2008) and those who were antisocial or delinquent in adolescence (Pajer, 1998) are more likely to encounter long-term adjustment problems, such as dysfunctional or violent romantic relationships in adulthood.

Purpose of the Study

Given the paucity of findings available on dating victimization from adolescence to early adulthood, this study presented a prospective examination of dating victimization from adolescence to early adulthood among a sample of young women drawn from a larger

representative community sample in Quebec, Canada. To date, only Halpern et al. (2009) have documented the prevalence rates of all patterns of dating victimization from adolescence to early adulthood, and have examined potential factors associated with these longitudinal patterns. Consequently, this study will contribute to the current literature on the longitudinal course of girls' dating victimization and will offer relevant implications for the design of prevention programs.

The first objective of this study was to provide prevalence estimates of psychological, physical, and sexual dating victimization among girls in adolescence and early adulthood, and to assess the persistence of these violent experiences across developmental periods. Considering these three forms of dating victimization represents a methodological strength over past studies that have only considered physical and/or sexual violence. The second objective was to investigate the potential influence of childhood behavior problems and adolescent risky lifestyle as predictors of longitudinal patterns of girls' dating victimization. Including adolescent parental monitoring and deviant peer affiliation in our analyses was also important mostly because of their strong association with adolescent risky lifestyle. Thus, the main research question asked in the current study is the following: Do childhood behavior problems and adolescent risky lifestyle predict differential longitudinal patterns of dating victimization? Exploring this question may help in the identification of girls at increased risk of dating victimization across developmental periods. Based on both theoretical models and empirical findings, we anticipated that adolescent risky lifestyle, but also childhood behavior problems, would emerge as possible predictors of persistent dating victimization among girls from adolescence to early adulthood.

Method

Participants

Participants were part of a longitudinal study initiated in 1986-1987 with a representative community sample of French-speaking kindergarten children in the province of Quebec (Canada). Two thousand children were selected randomly (946 girls) and 1017 additional participants were recruited to compose an at-risk sample (444 girls). These children were considered at risk for later adjustment problems because they scored at or above the 80th percentile (using gender-specific cut-offs) on parent or teacher reports of the Social Behavior Questionnaire aggression-disruptiveness scale (SBQ; Tremblay et al., 1991). Participants were approached for assessment annually between kindergarten and the age of 12, and again in adolescence (at age 15) and in early adulthood (at age 21). The vast majority of participants were middle-class, French-speaking, and Caucasians.

Of the original sample of 1390 girls involved in the longitudinal study, 929 accepted to participate in the adolescent assessment (mean age = 15.68, $SD = .48$) and 858 in the early adulthood assessment (mean age = 21.23, $SD = .73$). In the present analysis, only girls with data available on dating victimization in both adolescence and early adulthood were retained. Because only girls who had been dating during at least two weeks in the past year filled out the adolescent dating victimization questionnaire, the sample size was further reduced to 550 girls. Finally, 435 out of these 550 girls completed the young adult dating victimization measures. Based on the kindergarten assessment, there was no statistical difference between girls in the final sample and those who were not included in terms of teacher-rated aggression-disruptiveness ($t(958) = .05$, $p = .96$), and parents' socioeconomic status (mothers: $t(422) = -.82$, $p = .41$ and fathers: $t(738) = -1.02$, $p = .31$). However, girls in the final sample had mothers with lower levels of education than girls who were excluded ($t(941) = 3.54$, $p < .001$).

Procedure

When girls were in kindergarten, a first contact with their family was established through a letter sent to parents to invite them to participate in the study. Questionnaires were then sent to the schools, and teachers were in charge of sending them to the parents. Written consent was required from the parent and the teacher. When girls reached ages 15 and 21, a letter describing the study procedures and aims was sent at home. Research assistants then called participants by phone and scheduled interviews for those who agreed to participate in the study. At each time of data collection, interviews occurred in the girls' home, and participants received monetary compensation. This study was approved by the ethics board of the University of Montreal, and informed consent was obtained from all girls and from parents at the adolescent assessment.

Measures

Childhood behavior problems. In the spring of kindergarten, teacher completed the *Social Behavior Questionnaire* (SBQ; Tremblay et al., 1991) for each participant. For the purpose of the present study, we used the aggression-disruptiveness scale (13 items: e.g., restless, squirmy, fights with other children). Each item was rated on a 3-point Likert scale (0 = *did not apply*, 1 = *applied sometimes*, 2 = *applied often*). The psychometric properties of the SBQ have been well documented (Tremblay, Vitaro, Gagnon, Piché, & Royer, 1992), and internal consistency for the aggression-disruptiveness scale was high in the present study ($\alpha = .91$). Mean scores were used, such that higher scores indicated higher levels of behavior problems.

Parental monitoring in adolescence. The parental monitoring scale included six items. Five items asked the participants whether their parents know where and with whom they are when they go out, at what time they usually come back home, and how they spend their time when they stay home. Such items were scored on a 3-point Likert scale (1 = *almost never*, 2 = *sometimes*, 3 = *almost always*). Participants also answered one item asking them how important

it was for their parents to know about their activities (1 = *not important*, 2 = *a little important*, 3 = *very important*). These six items were standardized, and mean scores were used ($\alpha = .64$). Higher scores indicated higher levels of parental monitoring.

Deviant peer affiliation in adolescence. We measured deviant peer affiliation with nine items asking the participants whether or not their best female friend had ever ran away from home, been expelled or suspended from school, and been arrested by the police. The other five items were about whether they had ever been part of a gang that committed deviant acts and about the proportion of their friends that had ever been arrested, smoked cigarettes, and used drugs and alcohol (0 = *none*, 1 = *one or two*, 2 = *several of them*, 3 = *almost or all of them*). The nine items were standardized and the mean scores were used ($\alpha = .68$). Higher scores indicated higher levels of deviant peer affiliation.

Risky lifestyle in adolescence. Three indicators were included in this composite score of risky lifestyle: (a) risky sexual behaviors, (b) problematic substance use, and (c) delinquent behaviors. For risky sexual behaviors, participants were asked to report on their age at first sexual intercourse (0 = *never had sexual intercourse*, 1 = *had first sexual intercourse at 14 years old or later*, 2 = *had first sexual intercourse before the age of 14*), their lifetime number of sexual partners, the number of “one night stands” they had during the past 12 months (rated from 0 to 3 = *11 and more*) and the frequency at which they used condom (0 = *never had sexual intercourse*, 1 = *always use condom*, 2 = *sometimes use condom*, 3 = *never use condom*). These four items were standardized and the mean scores were used ($\alpha = .72$). For problematic substance use, we used a 12-item scale from Zoccolillo, Vitaro, and Tremblay (1999). Participants who had used alcohol or drugs more than five times in their life were asked to report the frequency of occurrence of problematic substance use on a 4-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = *never* to 4 = *many times*). Each of the following problems was included in two questions (i.e., one pertaining

to alcohol use, and the other to drug use): went to school intoxicated, got into fights while intoxicated, drove a motor vehicle while intoxicated, got into trouble with the police because of drugs or alcohol, engaged in sporting activities while intoxicated, and used drugs or alcohol before noon. Participants who had not used alcohol or drugs more than five times received a score of 0 on each alcohol or drug problems items. Mean scores were used ($\alpha = .93$). For delinquent behaviors, we used 17 items from the conduct disorder scale of the French version of the *Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children-2.25* (DISC-2.25; Breton, Bergeron, Valla, Berthiaume, & St-Georges, 1998). Participants were asked to report whether or not they had engaged in a range of delinquent behaviors during the past 12 months. Examples of items included running away from home, being expelled from school, stealing, and fighting. Mean scores were used ($\alpha = .74$). Last, the composite score for risky lifestyle was obtained by standardizing and averaging the three indicators, such that a higher score indicated a riskier lifestyle (correlations from .42 to .54, $p < .001$; $\alpha = .74$).

Dating victimization in adolescence. Participants who had been dating for at least two weeks during the past year completed a questionnaire on their experience of dating violence. The questionnaire covered psychological violence (six items: e.g., humiliated you or put you down), physical violence (seven items: e.g., pushed you, shoved you, slapped you) and sexual violence (six items: e.g., threatened you to or used some degree of physical force to incite you to have a complete sexual intercourse). Items were adapted from the *Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory* (PMWI; Kasian & Painter, 1992), the *Conflict Tactics Scales* (CTS; Straus, 1979) and the *Sexual Experience Survey* (SES; Koss & Gidycz, 1985). Participants who had more than one relationship in the past year were asked to refer to the most difficult one, and to indicate how often they had experienced each of the behaviors presented on a 4-point Likert scale (0 = never, 1 = once or twice, 2 = three to 10 times, 3 = 11 or more times). Internal

consistency was adequate for the psychological violence scale ($\alpha = .73$). In contrast with our initial analytic plan, we could not examine longitudinal patterns of physical and sexual dating victimization separately because of the low frequency of sexually violent acts reported in early adulthood ($n = 9$; 2.1%). Consequently, we combined the physical and sexual violence scales. Internal consistency for this composite score was adequate ($\alpha = .77$).

Dating victimization in early adulthood. Participants completed a questionnaire on dating violence experienced referring to their current romantic partner or to their last partner (in the past five years) if they were not currently involved in a romantic relationship. They had to indicate how often in the relationship their partner had engaged in each of the behaviors presented on a 4-point Likert scale (0 = *never*, 1 = *once or twice*, 2 = *three to 10 times*, 3 = *11 or more times*). To assess psychological violence, we used a nine-item scale (e.g., insulted or swore at you, shouted or yelled at you). Seven items were from the *Revised Conflict Tactics Scales* (CTS2; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996), two items were from the *Violence faite aux Filles dans les Fréquentations à l'Adolescence* questionnaire (VIFFA; Lavoie & Vézina, 2001). Internal consistency for this scale was good ($\alpha = .85$). To assess physical violence, we used 15 items from the CTS2 (e.g., punched or hit you with an object, slapped you). Sexual violence was measured with two items from the CTS2 asking the participants how often their romantic partner had used sexual coercion tactics (e.g., used threat or blackmail, used drugs or alcohol, or used physical force) to obtain sexual contacts or a complete sexual intercourse. These two items were added to the physical violence scale, and internal consistency when combining together these two scales was high ($\alpha = .92$).

Longitudinal patterns of dating victimization. To derive our longitudinal patterns, we dichotomized our measures of dating victimization in adolescence and early adulthood. For adolescent psychological violence, all girls with a total score equal to or above the 75th

percentile (score of 3) were assigned a value of 1, which meant that they reported sustaining multiple forms and/or repetitive acts of psychological violence; otherwise a value of 0 was assigned. Using this criterion, 121 adolescent girls (27.8%) reported having experienced psychological violence. The same criterion was used to dichotomize the early adult psychological violence total score. One hundred fifty-six young women (35.9%) reported having experienced psychological violence. For adolescent and early adult physical and sexual violence, girls who reported sustaining at least one act of violence from a romantic partner were assigned a value of 1; else a value of 0 was assigned. Seventy-three adolescent girls (15.8%) and 66 young women (15.2%) reported having experienced physical and/or sexual violence.

Following Halpern and colleagues' (2009) procedure, four longitudinal patterns of dating victimization were created. Young women reporting no dating victimization in both adolescence and early adulthood were classified as "*has not been victimized*"; those reporting victimization only in adolescence were classified as "*victimized in adolescence only*"; those reporting victimization only in early adulthood were classified as "*victimized in early adulthood only*"; and those reporting victimization in both adolescence and early adulthood were classified as "*revictimized*". These longitudinal patterns were created separately for psychological violence and for physical/sexual violence.

Statistical Analysis

First, all variables were examined for normality following the guidelines provided by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001). To improve normality, square root transformations were performed on two predictor variables, deviant peer affiliation and risky lifestyle, and a reflect transformation was also performed on parental monitoring. Second, descriptive statistics were generated and bivariate analyses (correlations) were conducted to assess associations among predictor variables. Third, univariate analyses of variance with post-hoc Bonferroni tests were

conducted for each predictor in order to evaluate potential differences among the four groups of young women (group A = “*has not been victimized*”, group B = “*victimized in adolescence only*”, group C = “*victimized in early adulthood only*”, and group D = “*revictimized*”). Analyses were performed separately for longitudinal patterns of psychological dating victimization and for longitudinal patterns of physical/sexual dating victimization. Fourth, multinomial logistic regression analyses were conducted to examine the associations between childhood and adolescent predictors (behavior problems in kindergarten; parental monitoring, deviant peer affiliation and risky lifestyle in adolescence) and longitudinal patterns of dating victimization (psychological and physical/sexual victimization were examined separately). The multinomial logistic model is an adequate method to examine the relationship between a set of predictors and a nominal outcome, such as the longitudinal patterns of dating victimization (Long, 1997).

Results

Descriptive and Bivariate Analyses

Frequencies, means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations for the predictor variables are shown in Table 1. Correlations revealed that childhood behavior problems were not associated with the three adolescent predictors (i.e., parental monitoring, deviant peer affiliation, and risky lifestyle). Nevertheless, these adolescent predictors were moderately to strongly associated with each other. Specifically, lower level of parental monitoring was moderately and positively linked to deviant peer affiliation and risky lifestyle, and deviant peer affiliation and risky lifestyle were highly and positively interrelated.

Analysis of Variance

A series of univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) with Bonferroni post-hoc tests were used to compare mean differences between the four groups of women across childhood and adolescent predictors. Table 2 presents the results for psychological dating victimization.

Prevalence rates of longitudinal victimization patterns reveal that 18.4% of young women (95% CI = 14.6 - 22.2) experienced psychological violence in adolescence only, 26.4% in young adulthood only (95% CI = 22.1 - 30.7), and 9.4% showed persistent victimization (95% CI = 6.5 - 12.3). ANOVA results indicate that both deviant peer affiliation and risky lifestyle differ significantly across groups. Among the four groups, young women classified as “*revictimized*” had the highest scores of deviant peer affiliation and risky lifestyle in adolescence (significantly higher than girls in the “*has not been victimized*” and “*victimized in early adulthood only*” groups), followed by girls in the “*victimized in adolescence only*” group. Young women in this group had higher scores of deviant peer affiliation and risky lifestyle than girls in the “*has not been victimized*” and “*victimized in early adulthood only*” groups.

The same analyses were conducted for physical/sexual dating victimization, and results are presented in Table 3. Prevalence rates of longitudinal victimization patterns show that 14.3% of young women (95% CI = 10.9 - 17.7) experienced physical/sexual violence in adolescence only, 12.6% in young adulthood only (95% CI = 9.4 - 15.8), and 2.5% experienced persistent victimization (95% CI = 0.9 - 4.1). The ANOVA indicates similar patterns as for psychological dating victimization: the omnibus test revealed significant differences across groups for childhood behavior problems. Yet, subsequent post-hoc analyses did not highlight any significant differences between specific groups, probably due to a lack of statistical power.

Multinomial Logistic Regression

Predicting psychological dating victimization. Table 4 presents the results from a multinomial logistic regression model that examined the association between childhood and adolescent predictor variables and the longitudinal patterns of psychological dating victimization, using the “*has not been victimized*” group as the referent category. Results indicate that parental monitoring in adolescence was not statistically associated with any pattern of victimization, but

childhood behavior problems was marginally associated with an elevated risk for revictimization (OR = 1.07, 95% CI = .99 – 1.17). Deviant peer affiliation in adolescence was associated with an elevated risk for dating victimization in adolescence only (OR = 1.58, 95% CI = 1.00 - 2.49). Risky lifestyle in adolescence was also associated with an increased risk of being victimized in adolescence only (OR = 1.78, 95% CI = 1.00 – 3.17), but it was also associated with revictimization (OR = 2.55, 95% CI = 1.19 – 5.47).

Predicting physical/sexual dating victimization. Table 5 presents the results from a multinomial logistic regression model that examined the association between childhood and adolescent variables and the longitudinal patterns of physical/sexual dating victimization, using the “*has not been victimized*” group as the referent category. Results indicate that parental monitoring and deviant peer affiliation in adolescence were not statistically associated with any pattern of dating victimization. Childhood behavior problems were associated with an elevated risk for victimization in early adulthood only (OR = 1.08, 95% CI = 1.01 – 1.16) and for revictimization (OR = 1.21, 95% CI = 1.03 – 1.42). Risky lifestyle in adolescence was associated with an increased risk of being victimized in adolescence only (OR = 2.01, 95% CI = 1.10 – 3.69), and in early adulthood only (OR = 2.22, 95% CI = 1.17 – 4.19).

Discussion

The current study is, to our knowledge, one of the first to prospectively examine girls’ dating victimization in adolescence and early adulthood. Our aim was twofold: (1) to document the prevalence of longitudinal patterns of psychological and of physical/sexual dating victimization, and (2) to examine, within the framework of lifestyle/routine activities theories, the potential contribution of childhood behavior problems and adolescent risky lifestyle as predictors of longitudinal patterns of dating victimization. Given the detrimental effects associated with girls’ dating victimization, research exploring potential factors associated with

longitudinal patterns is important. A better understanding of these factors is likely to offer relevant clues for the elaboration of efficient preventive interventions for victimization in the context of dating relationships, as well as for reducing risks of revictimization.

Prevalence of Longitudinal Patterns of Dating Victimization

Results show that psychological victimization in girls' dating relationships is relatively common; in fact, more than half (54%) of girls have experienced such violent experiences by early adulthood. The most common victimization pattern was "*victimized in early adulthood only*" (26%), which is consistent with previous findings that showed that older age is associated with higher prevalence of dating victimization (Halpern et al., 2001). Furthermore, findings indicate a cumulative prevalence rate of 28% for psychological victimization in adolescence, which is also comparable with the estimate provided in a large representative sample of U.S. adolescents (Halpern et al., 2001). However, our cumulative prevalence rate of 36% for early adult victimization is somewhat lower than that observed in other studies (e.g., Magdol et al., 1997). This estimate may have been lower mainly because in contrast with other studies, we did not consider a young woman to be a victim of psychological violence whenever she reported having experienced any of the psychological violence behaviors on the scale. Rather, only girls who had been subjected to multiple forms and/or repetitive acts of psychological violence were considered as being victimized. In this context, our finding that about one out of 10 girls has experienced persistent psychological violence in adolescence and in early adulthood is alarming.

The prevalence rates of longitudinal patterns of physical/sexual victimization found in the current study are slightly different from those reported by Halpern et al. (2009). Our findings suggest that almost 30% of girls had experienced physical and/or sexual violence by early adulthood. The most common prevalence pattern was "*victimized in adolescence only*" (14% versus 9% in Halpern et al.), whereas the prevalence of "*victimized in early adulthood only*" was

substantively lower (13%) than the numbers reported by Halpern et al. (27%). As a result, the revictimization pattern was lower in our study, with 2.5% of girls reporting persistent physical/sexual victimization (versus 8% in Halpern et al.). One possible explanation for the differences between our results and those presented by Halpern et al. is that their measure included an item asking participants whether or not their partner “had threatened them with violence”. We used a similar item, but only in our measure of early adult psychological victimization adapted from the CTS2 (Straus et al., 1996). Because this item tends to be endorsed more frequently than those describing direct acts of physical violence (Magdol et al., 1997), the rate of physical/sexual prevalence in early adulthood would probably have been higher in this study if we had included it. Moreover, in our study, girls were asked to report dating victimization referring to one dating partner compared to up to three partners in the study conducted by Halpern et al. (2009). Nonetheless, our cumulative adolescent estimate of physical/sexual dating victimization is consistent with previous research (Halpern et al. 2001; Silveman, Raj, & Mucci, & Hathaway, 2001), whereas our early adult cumulative prevalence rate is lower than other studies (Ehrensaft et al., 2003; Magdol et al., 1997).

Predictors of Longitudinal Patterns of Dating Victimization

In this study, we tested whether childhood and adolescent predictors differentiated girls who were victimized in adolescence and/or in young adulthood from those who were not victimized in any of these developmental periods. For psychological dating violence, as predicted, results showed that a higher level of adolescent risky lifestyle was associated, with an increased probability of experiencing victimization in adolescence only, but also revictimization by early adulthood. Childhood behavior problems were also linked to the revictimization pattern, but this association was statistically marginal. For physical/sexual dating violence, as anticipated, childhood behavior problems emerged as a significant predictor of revictimization, and they

were associated with victimization experienced in early adulthood only. Adolescent risky lifestyle was also associated with victimization experienced in early adulthood and with victimization experienced in adolescence only, but not to an increased risk of revictimization. The failure to find an association between adolescent risky lifestyle and revictimization in the context of romantic relationships may be due to a lack of power (only 11 participants were classified as “*revictimized*”), rather than to the true absence of such a relationship. In fact, in univariate analyses, girls who had been “*revictimized*” by early adulthood reported a higher level of adolescent risky lifestyle than girls who “*has not been victimized*”.

Overall, our findings suggest that girls with a history of childhood or adolescent behavior problems may be at greater risk of experiencing dating violence (psychological and/or physical/sexual) either in adolescence or early adulthood, or at both developmental periods, than not sustaining dating victimization. Such results are consistent with past research linking childhood behavior problems (Magdol et al., 1998; Woodward, Fergusson, & Horwood, 2002), adolescent risky lifestyle (Eaton et al., 2007; Gover, 2004; Howard & Wang, 2003), and dating victimization. Moreover, the current longitudinal study contributed to the literature by identifying some factors that may place girls at increased risk not only to be victimized in adolescence, but also to be revictimized five or six years later in the context of their romantic relationships in early adulthood. Although it would be tempting to conclude that behavior problems in childhood and adolescent risky lifestyle are both part of a single developmental chain that increases the risk of being victimized by a romantic partner in adolescence or young adulthood, our results do not support this hypothesis. In fact, in this study, childhood behavior problems and adolescent risky lifestyle were not statistically correlated.

One possible explanation for this finding is provided by the taxonomic theory (Moffitt, 1993). This theory suggests that antisocial behaviors can follow two trajectories: (1) those

behaviors can begin early in childhood and persist throughout life, or (2) they can be limited to adolescence. The proportion of adolescent girls in the first trajectory is very low (1% versus 18% in to the second trajectory; Moffitt & Caspi, 2001); thus it may be difficult to detect this group statistically and identify a positive association between childhood and adolescent problem behaviors. In addition, the childhood-onset trajectory differs from the adolescent-onset one because they have distinct etiologies and different outcomes across adult life course, but young women following both trajectories appear to be at greater risk of being victimized in their romantic relationships. Woodward et al. (2002) found that the risk was highest for women with early onset problems, but those with late onset problems were still at higher risk than their counterparts who had no history of antisocial problems. In fact, although young women with childhood-onset and adolescent-onset antisocial behaviors have different childhood backgrounds, they may share similar experiences during adolescence, including deviant peer affiliation, time spent in unsupervised social settings, and manifestations of risky behaviors. According to lifestyle/routine activities theories, such experiences may increase the likelihood of victimization (Spano & Freilich, 2009). In addition, girls who display antisocial behaviors may be at higher risk of choosing a dating partner with similar attributes (assortative partnering). Thus, the risk of being victimized may increase for these girls because they date antisocial boys who tend to be more violent with their romantic partners (Capaldi, Dishion, Stoolmiller, & Yoerger, 2001).

Lifestyle/routine activities theories may be relevant to explaining dating revictimization among young women with childhood-onset problem behaviors. Although rare (Moffitt & Caspi, 2001), some women continue to exhibit antisocial behaviors throughout adulthood (Moffitt & Caspi, 2001), and this may place them at greater risk for repeated victimization. However, these theories can hardly explain why young women with adolescent-limited antisocial behaviors may also be revictimized. Other models, such as state dependence theory (Ousey, & Brummel, 2008),

should be explored. This theory proposes that revictimization is attributable to individual and/or social context changes resulting from prior victimization. For example, Roberts et al. (2003) found that depressed mood, suicidal behavior, and risky lifestyle were not only precursors of adolescent dating victimization, but were also consequences of it. As Moffitt and Caspi (2001) have argued, girls on the adolescent-limited path may compromise their ability to make a successful transition into adulthood because of the negative long-term repercussions of their adolescent risky lifestyle.

Limitations

The current study has limitations that can suggest directions for future research. First, our sample was predominantly Caucasian and middle-class, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population of young women. In addition, our sample was relatively small for considering differential longitudinal trajectories ($N = 435$). Because this is the first study to document prospectively the prevalence of psychological and physical/sexual dating victimization among girls from adolescence to early adulthood, it would be useful to replicate this study using a larger and more diverse sample, and thereby increase the confidence in our findings. Future studies including larger samples could be particularly informative if they make it possible to examine separately the longitudinal patterns of all three types of victimization, without having to merge sexual and physical victimization patterns as we did in this study. Second, because the data about girls' perpetration of dating violence were not available at the adolescent wave of this longitudinal research project, we did not include dating violence perpetration in our analyses. Future studies on dating violence should consider mutual violent behaviors, which may be very common among young violent couples (Gray & Foshee, 1997). Third, we did not consider the possible impact of family violence in our model. In their longitudinal study, Ehrensaft et al. (2003) showed that the strong association they found between

adolescent behavior problems and victimization in adult romantic relationships did not remain statistically significant after controlling for exposure to interparental violence during childhood. Future work on the relationship between behavior problems and dating victimization would thus benefit from including factors related to family violence. Fourth, we had no information on the level of risky lifestyle adopted by young women in early adulthood. Consequently, we could not examine how the relationship between risky lifestyle and dating victimization vary across developmental periods. To address this question, future studies should gather data at several points from adolescence to early adulthood, and test how this association changes over time and how several sources of influence (e.g., peers, family, community) may impact this relationship. Finally, mechanisms that could mediate and/or moderate the relation between adolescent dating victimization and revictimization by young adulthood, such as psychological or behavioral outcomes of dating victimization, need to be explored in future research.

Implications

Despite the limitations described above, our findings have several implications for the prevention of dating violence. In fact, our findings suggest that girls with a history of childhood behavior problems and/or adolescent risky lifestyle deserve particular attention from practitioners who design preventive measures. One promising avenue in addressing this issue is the *Fourth R* project, a school-based prevention program recently developed and implemented in several Canadian provinces (Wolfe, 2006; Wolfe et al., 2009). This program is particularly innovative and relevant with regard to our findings because it aims at reducing both adolescent violence (i.e., bullying, peer and dating violence) and related risky behaviors, such as substance use and risky sexual practices. This program targets youths in grades 9–11 and promotes the development of healthy relationships and responsible choices within the social context of adolescence.

Another interesting avenue would be that applied research targeting youth violence prevention includes partner violence as a major outcome (Ehrensaft, 2008). Because antisocial, delinquent, and risky behaviors are more visible than dating victimization, girls who adopt a risky lifestyle would be easier to reach through intervention programs for youth presenting antisocial behavior than through traditional programs targeting dating violence specifically. Moreover, our results suggest that adolescent girls with a history of childhood behavior problems could benefit from preventive initiatives implemented earlier. Many prevention programs that target youth antisocial behavior start in childhood (e.g., *Fast Track Program*; The Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2002). Future research should thus explore whether antisocial behavior prevention efforts have an impact on girls' dating victimization in adolescence and early adulthood, or at both developmental periods.

Conclusion

This study provided new information regarding longitudinal patterns of psychological and physical/sexual dating victimization among girls from adolescence to early adulthood. It suggests that a substantial number of girls have experienced dating victimization either in adolescence or in young adulthood, or at both developmental periods. Our analyses showed that childhood behavior problems and adolescent risky lifestyle are associated with several patterns of dating victimization (versus none), including revictimization by young adulthood, even after controlling for adolescent parental monitoring and deviant peer affiliation. Consequently, the current data highlight the importance of early intervention with disruptive girls to prevent developmental trajectories that could lead to adult victimization. Preventing and treating behavior problems and intervening on risky lifestyle and on dating violence concurrently may be key factors in the prevention of victimization in the context of romantic relationships.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations among Childhood and Adolescent Predictors

Predictor	1	2	3	4	M (SD)
Childhood					
1. Behavior problems					3.29 (3.81)
Adolescence					
2. Parental monitoring	.02	-			2.93 (.55)
3. Deviant peer affiliation	-.05	.26***	-		2.72 (.79)
4. Risky lifestyle	.01	.25***	.64***	-	1.72 (.62)

*** $p < .001$.

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations of each Group for Longitudinal Patterns of Psychological Dating Victimization

Predictor	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	F	Mean difference (p < .05)						
	Has not been victimized	Victimized in adolescence only	Victimized in early adulthood only	Revictimized		A-B	A-C	A-D	B-C	B-D	C-D	
	(n=199) 45.7%	(n=80) 18.4%	(n=115) 26.4%	(n=41) 9.4%								
Childhood												
Behavior problems	3.27 (.93)	2.75 (3.27)	3.28 (3.75)	4.41 (4.24)	1.72	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Adolescence												
Parental monitoring	2.89 (.53)	3.05 (.56)	2.90 (.57)	2.98 (.60)	1.75	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deviant peer affiliation	2.63 (.74)	3.09 (.81)	2.51 (.75)	3.04 (.81)	12.31***	-.46	-	-.41	.58	-	-	-.53
Risky lifestyle	1.62 (.60)	1.98 (.64)	1.59 (.57)	2.06 (.58)	13.06***	-.35	-	-.44	.39	-	-	-.48

*** $p < .001$.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations of each Group for Longitudinal Patterns of Physical/Sexual Dating Victimization

Predictor	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	F	Mean difference (p < .05)					
	Has not been victimized (n=307) 70.6%	Victimized in adolescence only (n=62) 14.3%	Victimized in early adulthood only (n=55) 12.6%	Revictimized (n=11) 2.5%		A-B	A-C	A-D	B-C	B-D	C-D
Childhood											
Behavior problems	3.04 (3.66)	3.26 (4.09)	4.29 (3.93)	5.36 (4.65)	2.85*	-	-	-	-	-	-
Adolescence											
Parental monitoring	2.95 (.56)	2.94 (.57)	2.82 (.48)	3.06 (.52)	1.08	-	-	-	-	-	-
Deviant peer affiliation	2.66 (.76)	3.05 (.89)	2.63 (.71)	3.28 (.95)	6.20***	-.40	-	-	-.42	-	-
Risky lifestyle	1.64 (.62)	1.98 (.61)	1.79 (.51)	2.13 (.62)	7.45***	-.34	-	-.49	-	-	-

* $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

Table 4

Multinomial Logistic Regression Predicting Longitudinal Patterns of Psychological Dating Victimization as a Function of Childhood and Adolescent Predictors

Predictor	Victimized in adolescence only	Victimized in early adulthood only	Revictimized versus has not
	versus has not been victimized OR (95% CI)	versus has not been victimized OR (95% CI)	been victimized OR (95% CI)
Childhood			
Behavior Problems	.96 (.89-1.04)	1.00 (.94-1.06)	1.07 (.99-1.17) ^m
Adolescence			
Parental monitoring	1.17 (.71-1.91)	1.10 (.70-1.71)	.93 (.49-1.80)
Deviant peer affiliation	1.58 (1.00-2.49)*	.77 (.52-1.13)	1.27 (.70-2.29)
Risky lifestyle	1.78 (1.00-3.17)*	1.09 (.67-1.77)	2.55 (1.19-5.47)*

Note. OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval. χ^2 (12, $N = 430$) = 48.59, $p < .001$. The Nagelkerke R^2 was .12 for the full model.

* $p < .05$. ^m = marginal: $p < .10$.

Table 5

Multinomial Logistic Regression Predicting Longitudinal Patterns of Physical/Sexual Dating Victimization as a Function of Childhood and Adolescent Predictors

Predictor	Victimized in adolescence only	Victimized in early adulthood only	Revictimised versus has not
	versus has not been victimized	versus has not been victimized	been victimized
	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)	OR (95% CI)
Childhood			
Behavior problems	1.03 (.95-1.11)	1.08 (1.01-1.16)*	1.21 (1.03-1.42)*
Adolescence			
Parental monitoring	.69 (.40-1.17)	.57 (.31-1.02)	.80 (.22-2.89)
Deviant peer affiliation	1.46 (.91-2.34)	.74 (.45-1.21)	2.11 (.64-6.99)
Risky lifestyle	2.01 (1.10-3.69)*	2.22 (1.17-4.19)*	1.57 (.36-6.81)

Note. OR = odds ratio; CI = confidence interval. $\chi^2(12, N = 430) = 39.47, p < .001$. The Nagelkerke R^2 was .11 for the full model.

* $p < .05$.

CHAPITRE VI

DISCUSSION GÉNÉRALE

DISCUSSION GÉNÉRALE

Durant l'adolescence, les premières expériences amoureuses émergent et occupent au fil du temps une place de plus en plus importante dans l'univers social et affectif des jeunes (Furman, 2002). Il est alors très préoccupant de constater qu'un nombre important d'adolescentes subissent de la violence dans ce contexte et que certaines d'entre elles seront revictimisées dans leurs relations amoureuses au début de l'âge adulte (Halpern, Spriggs, Martin, et Kupper, 2009). Cette thèse doctorale s'est intéressée à l'étude de certains facteurs personnels et contextuels potentiellement associés à un risque plus élevé de victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles. Plus spécifiquement, cette thèse avait comme objectif principal d'examiner la contribution des problèmes de comportement et de l'association avec des pairs déviants, tout en considérant la supervision parentale, dans la prédiction de la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles à l'adolescence, ainsi que des trajectoires de victimisation de l'adolescence au début de l'âge adulte.

Dans le premier article de la thèse, la valeur prédictive d'un modèle médiateur inspiré des théories des activités routinières et des styles de vie (« *lifestyles and routine activities theories* ») a été examinée. Le modèle postulait que l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque - soit d'un mode de vie axé sur l'émission de problèmes de comportement - agit en tant que médiateur entre l'association avec des pairs déviants et la violence subie dans les relations amoureuses des filles à l'adolescence. Les résultats ont révélé, en considérant les problèmes de comportement dans l'enfance et la supervision parentale, que le lien entre l'association avec des pairs déviants et la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des adolescentes pouvait être expliqué, du moins partiellement pour la violence psychologique et totalement pour la violence physique/sexuelle, par l'adoption chez les filles d'un style de vie à risque.

Dans le deuxième article de la thèse, le premier objectif consistait à documenter la prévalence des patrons longitudinaux de violence subie dans les

relations amoureuses des filles de l'adolescence au début de l'âge adulte. Dans l'ensemble, les résultats ont révélé que la victimisation dans le contexte des relations amoureuses des filles est relativement répandue et que la revictimisation est un phénomène touchant un nombre important de jeunes femmes. Le deuxième objectif était d'examiner la contribution respective des problèmes de comportement dans l'enfance ainsi que de l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque à l'adolescence pour prédire les patrons longitudinaux de victimisation. Les résultats ont indiqué, en considérant l'association avec des pairs déviants et la supervision parentale à l'adolescence, que les problèmes de comportement dans l'enfance ainsi que l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque à l'adolescence sont associés à des probabilités plus élevées pour les filles d'être victimes de violence (psychologique et/ou physique/sexuelle) à l'adolescence ou au début de l'âge adulte, ou encore d'être revictimisées.

Dans ce dernier chapitre de la thèse, les principaux résultats de ces deux articles seront d'abord intégrés et discutés selon deux points majeurs, soient les taux de prévalence ainsi que les facteurs de risque associés à la victimisation et à la revictimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles. Les contributions originales de la thèse seront ensuite abordées, de même que ses limites ainsi que les pistes de recherches futures qui en découlent. Enfin, les implications des résultats pour l'élaboration des initiatives de prévention seront discutées.

4.1 Intégration des résultats

4.1.1 Les taux de prévalence de la victimisation et de la revictimisation dans les relations amoureuses

Les résultats issus de cette thèse confirment que la violence peut s'immiscer dans les toutes premières relations amoureuses des jeunes filles. La première étude révèle que parmi les 550 adolescentes âgées en moyenne de 15 ans qui ont fréquenté un garçon pendant les 12 mois précédant l'étude, près de 30% rapportent avoir vécu

de la violence psychologique et environ 16% déclarent avoir subi de la violence physique et/ou de la violence sexuelle de la part de leur partenaire amoureux. Ces estimations des taux de victimisation sont comparables à celles obtenues dans d'autres études utilisant des échantillons représentatifs des adolescentes québécoises (Lavoie et Vézina, 2002) et américaines (Halpern, Oslak, Young, Martin, et Kupper, 2001; Silverman, Raj, Mucci, et Hathaway, 2001).

La seconde étude visait à explorer de façon prospective les expériences de victimisation vécues par les filles dans leurs relations amoureuses au début de l'âge adulte. Quatre cent trente-cinq des 550 adolescentes composant l'échantillon de la première étude ont à nouveau répondu à un questionnaire portant sur leurs expériences de victimisation subies de la part de leur partenaire amoureux actuel ou de la part de leur dernier partenaire amoureux à l'âge de 21 ans. Les résultats issus de cette étude corroborent l'existence de différents patrons longitudinaux de victimisation dans les relations amoureuses chez les filles. Ainsi, en ce qui a trait à la violence psychologique, 18% des filles en ont été victimes exclusivement à l'adolescence; 26% exclusivement au début de l'âge adulte; alors que 9% des filles ont été revictimisées. En ce qui concerne la violence physique/sexuelle, 14% des filles en ont été victimes exclusivement à l'adolescence; 13% exclusivement au début de l'âge adulte et 2,5% des filles ont été revictimisées.

À notre connaissance, la seconde étude de cette thèse est la première à documenter la prévalence de la victimisation psychologique à deux périodes développementales distinctes. Les résultats indiquent qu'approximativement une fille sur 10 a été victimisée à l'adolescence et revictimisée au début de l'âge adulte. En ce qui concerne la violence physique/sexuelle, à notre connaissance, seule l'étude de Halpern *et al.* (2009) a également documenté les patrons longitudinaux de victimisation de l'adolescence au début de l'âge adulte. Ces auteurs rapportent que 8% des filles déclarent avoir été victimisées à l'adolescence et avoir été revictimisées au début de l'âge adulte, comparativement à 2,5% dans la présente étude. Par ailleurs, les estimations de la victimisation psychologique et physique/sexuelle au début de

l'âge adulte sont aussi moins élevées dans la présente étude que dans d'autres études conduites dans le domaine (ex. : Ehrensaft *et al.*, 2003; Magdol *et al.* 1997). Ces écarts décelés peuvent être attribuables, en partie du moins, à des différences sur le plan de l'opérationnalisation de la victimisation, des échantillons, ainsi que des mesures utilisées. Néanmoins, compte tenu de la méthodologie employée dans la présente étude, il est permis de croire que les taux de prévalence de la revictimisation psychologique et physique/sexuelle chez les jeunes femmes demeurent sous-estimés. En effet, les expériences de victimisation ne sont rapportées qu'en fonction d'un seul partenaire (c.-à.-d., le partenaire actuel ou le plus récent), et la durée de cette relation est inconnue. Il est possible que cette relation amoureuse soit récente et que la jeune femme ait vécu, par exemple à l'âge de 19 ou 20 ans, des expériences de victimisation de la part d'un autre partenaire, ce qu'elle n'a pas eu l'opportunité de rapporter dans le cadre de la présente étude.

4.1.2 Les facteurs de risque associés à la victimisation et à la revictimisation dans les relations amoureuses

Plusieurs études ont démontré que les problèmes de comportement manifestés durant l'enfance ou l'adolescence constituent des facteurs de risque associés à la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles à l'adolescence ou au début de l'âge adulte (voir Vézina et Hébert, 2007 pour une recension de ces études). Cette thèse doctorale visait à accroître notre compréhension de ces relations en utilisant une perspective développementale et contextuelle, et en examinant si ces facteurs de risque étaient aussi associés à la revictimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles. Dans le but de favoriser l'intégration des résultats obtenus en regard de ces objectifs de recherche, deux principaux éléments seront abordés. Ces éléments concernent, d'une part, le rôle médiateur du style de vie à risque dans la relation entre l'affiliation avec des pairs déviants et la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses et, d'autre part, le lien entre les problèmes de comportement dans l'enfance et

l'adolescence et les patrons longitudinaux de victimisation dans les relations amoureuses.

4.1.2.1 Le rôle médiateur du style de vie à risque dans la relation entre l'affiliation avec des pairs déviants et la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses

Les résultats issus du premier article de la thèse montrent que l'affiliation avec des pairs déviants est un facteur de risque associé à la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles à l'adolescence. Ainsi, plus les adolescentes s'affilient avec des pairs déviants, plus elles sont susceptibles de rapporter être victimes de violence dans leurs relations amoureuses. Les postulats dérivés des théories des activités routinières et des styles de vie (« *lifestyles and routine activities theories* »; Cohen et Felson, 1979; Hindelang, Gottfredson, et Garofalo, 1978) étaient mis de l'avant afin de tenter d'expliquer cette relation. L'hypothèse selon laquelle l'association avec des pairs déviants est liée à l'adoption chez les filles d'un style de vie à risque a été soutenue. Plus les filles rapportent s'affilier avec des pairs déviants, plus elles sont enclines à adopter un style de vie à risque, c'est-à-dire un mode de vie axé sur l'émission de multiples problèmes de comportement (comportements sexuels à risque, consommation problématique de substances psychotropes et délinquance). Les résultats de l'étude indiquent que le style de vie à risque joue un rôle médiateur partiel entre l'affiliation avec des pairs déviants et la victimisation psychologique, et un rôle médiateur complet en ce qui concerne la victimisation physique/sexuelle. En d'autres termes, plus les filles s'associent avec des pairs déviants, plus elles adoptent un style de vie à risque et en conséquence, plus les probabilités qu'elles soient victimes de violence dans le contexte des relations amoureuses sont élevées.

Il est toutefois important de noter que les résultats de cette première étude reposent sur des données de nature transversale et que, par conséquent, la direction des relations inférées ne peut être clairement établie. Il serait donc possible que ce soit l'affiliation avec des pairs déviants qui agisse en tant que médiateur dans la

relation entre l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque et la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des adolescentes. Une étude longitudinale récente porte cependant à croire que les caractéristiques déviantes du groupe de pairs contribuent davantage à l'augmentation des problèmes de comportement chez les adolescents que l'inverse (Boislard, Poulin, Kiesner, et Dishion, 2009).

Dans le domaine de la recherche portant sur la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses, aucune étude n'a considéré simultanément la contribution respective de l'affiliation avec des pairs déviants et du style de vie à risque. Néanmoins, les résultats obtenus dans ce premier article de thèse abondent dans la même direction que les études qui ont documenté que certaines caractéristiques liées au groupe de pairs (par ex. : avoir des amis qui vivent de la violence dans leurs relations amoureuses, subir ou infliger des comportements agressifs au sein du groupe de pairs) sont associées à la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des adolescentes (Arriaga et Foshee, 2004; Foshee, Benefield, Ennett, Bauman, et Suchindran, 2004; Reuterman et Burcky, 1989; Williams, Connolly, Pepler, Craig, et Laporte, 2008). De plus, les données de la présente étude concordent avec celles de Howard, Qiu et Boekeloo (2003) qui indiquent que le fait d'être exposé à des pairs qui consomment de l'alcool augmente le risque de victimisation dans les relations amoureuses à l'adolescence. Ces chercheurs interprétaient cette association, entre autres, en suggérant que la fréquentation des réseaux de pairs déviants augmente la propension des adolescents à adopter un style de vie à risque. Les résultats de cette thèse soutiennent cette hypothèse.

Finalement, dans le second article de la thèse, l'affiliation avec des pairs déviants à l'adolescence, tout comme la supervision parentale, ne s'est pas révélée être associée à la victimisation vécue exclusivement au début de l'âge adulte, ni à la revictimisation. De telles associations n'étaient pas anticipées et sont concordantes avec les perspectives développementales qui soutiennent que l'influence des pairs est à son apogée durant la période de l'adolescence, surtout en ce qui a trait à l'émergence des relations amoureuses (Brown, 1999; Connolly, Craig, Goldberg, et

Pepler, 2004; Connolly, Furman, et Konarsky, 2000; Feiring, 1999) et des problèmes de comportement (Gardner et Steinberg, 2005).

4.1.2.2 Le lien entre les problèmes de comportement dans l'enfance et l'adolescence et les patrons longitudinaux de victimisation dans les relations amoureuses

Les résultats issus du second article de la thèse indiquent que les problèmes de comportement durant l'enfance et l'adolescence sont associés à plusieurs patrons longitudinaux de victimisation psychologique et physique/sexuelle (en comparant ces patrons au groupe de filles qui n'ont subi aucune expérience de victimisation). Plus précisément, les problèmes de comportement durant l'enfance sont associés positivement à un risque plus élevé pour les filles d'être physiquement et/ou sexuellement victimisées exclusivement au début de l'âge adulte ainsi que d'être revictimisées. Une relation marginale au plan statistique est également trouvée entre les problèmes de comportement durant l'enfance et la revictimisation psychologique. Les problèmes de comportement à l'adolescence, c'est-à-dire l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque, sont associés positivement à des probabilités plus élevées pour les filles d'être victimes de violence psychologique et de violence physique/sexuelle exclusivement à l'adolescence. Les résultats de la première étude de la thèse sont donc maintenus malgré la taille échantillonnale moins élevée en raison du taux d'attrition entre les deux temps de mesures. De plus, l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque à l'adolescence est associée à des probabilités plus élevées pour les filles d'être victimes de violence physique/sexuelle exclusivement au début de l'âge adulte et d'être revictimisées psychologiquement. Il est à noter qu'étant donné le nombre peu élevé de jeunes femmes qui ont été revictimisées physiquement et/ou sexuellement ($n = 11$), l'absence d'une relation significative entre ce patron de victimisation et le style de vie à risque pourrait être attribuable en partie à un manque de puissance statistique.

En résumé, les résultats de cette étude concordent avec ceux rapportés par d'autres chercheurs (Eaton, Davis, Barrios, Brener, et Noonan, 2009; Gover, 2004;

Howard et Wang, 2003; Magdol *et al.*, 1998; Woodward, Fergusson, et Horwood, 2002) et suggèrent que les problèmes de comportement durant l'enfance et l'adoption d'un style de vie à l'adolescence peuvent mener à des expériences de victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles à l'adolescence ou au début de l'âge adulte. De plus, les résultats de cette étude montrent que ces mêmes facteurs de risque peuvent aussi mener à des expériences de revictimisation. Il s'agit d'une contribution importante de la thèse. En effet, très peu d'études ont documenté les facteurs de risque associés à la continuité des expériences de victimisation de l'adolescence au début de l'âge adulte en ayant recours à un devis longitudinal outre Halpern *et al.* (2009) et Spriggs, Halpern, et Martin (2009).

De surcroît, les résultats de cette étude appuient la pertinence d'examiner les facteurs de risque de la victimisation en fonction des différents patrons longitudinaux. Cette méthodologie a permis d'identifier certaines nuances à considérer dans l'étude du lien entre les problèmes de comportement et la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles. Par exemple, les problèmes de comportement manifestés dans l'enfance ne prédisent pas la victimisation vécue exclusivement à l'adolescence. Néanmoins, ils prédisent la victimisation physique/sexuelle vécue exclusivement au début de l'âge adulte ainsi que la revictimisation. L'absence de lien entre les problèmes de comportement dans l'enfance et la victimisation vécue exclusivement à l'adolescence aurait pu s'expliquer par une médiation totale de cette relation par le style de vie à risque adopté à l'adolescence. Or, les résultats de l'étude ne soutiennent pas cette hypothèse. En fait, aucune corrélation entre les problèmes de comportement dans l'enfance et à l'adolescence n'a été observée.

Les travaux réalisés par Moffitt (1993; Moffit et Caspi, 2001) sur le développement des comportements antisociaux chez les jeunes pourraient offrir une explication possible à ce résultat plutôt inattendu. Selon la théorie développée par cette chercheuse, les jeunes qui adoptent des comportements antisociaux peuvent emprunter deux trajectoires développementales distinctes. Dans la première trajectoire, les problèmes de comportement émergent dans l'enfance et persistent tout

au long de la vie (« *life-course-persistent* ») tandis que dans la seconde, la manifestation des comportements antisociaux et délinquants se limite à la période de l'adolescence (« *adolescence-limited* »). La vaste majorité des filles qui présentent des problèmes de comportement à l'adolescence appartiennent à la deuxième catégorie (*adolescence-limited* : 18% versus *life-course-persistent* : 1%; Moffitt et Caspi, 2001). Dans cette thèse, il n'était malheureusement pas possible, compte tenu du devis de recherche utilisé, d'identifier ces deux groupes de façon statistique. Néanmoins, il semble plausible que l'étude ait mis en lumière, d'une part, certains des mécanismes sous-jacents à la réalité sociale et amoureuse des adolescentes qui se sont mises à adopter un style de vie à risque alors qu'elles n'avaient pas manifesté de problèmes de comportement durant l'enfance. D'autre part, il est également possible que les associations entre les problèmes de comportement dans l'enfance et les expériences de victimisation et de revictimisation au début de l'âge adulte traduisent la réalité des filles qui appartiennent à la première catégorie (*life-course-persistent*). Les filles qui présentaient des problèmes de comportement durant l'enfance sont plus à risque de vivre des problèmes d'adaptation importants dans les différentes sphères de leur vie au début de l'âge adulte, notamment au plan amoureux (Fontaine *et al.*, 2008).

Par ailleurs, les filles qui adoptent un style de vie à risque à l'adolescence et ce, peu importe auquel des deux groupes elles appartiennent, semblent vivre des expériences personnelles et sociales qui peuvent les placer à risque d'être victimisées dans leurs relations amoureuses. Les théories des activités routinières et des styles de vie (Cohen et Felson, 1979; Hindelang, Gottfredson, et Garofalo, 1978; Spano et Freilich, 2009) suggèrent que le risque de victimisation augmente en présence de facteurs tels que l'affiliation avec des pairs déviants, le temps passé dans des contextes sociaux non supervisés et l'émission de problèmes de comportement. Il est fort à parier que les filles appartenant à la première catégorie (*life-course-persistent*) évolueront jusqu'à l'âge adulte en présence de ces facteurs de risque, ce qui pourrait les rendre plus vulnérables aux expériences de victimisation répétées (Lauritsen et

Davis Quinet, 1995; Wittebrood et Nieuwebeerta, 2000). Par contre, selon Moffitt (1993), les filles qui appartiennent à la deuxième catégorie (*adolescence-limited*) ne devraient généralement plus évoluer dans un contexte risqué au début de l'âge adulte et, en conséquence, ne devraient plus être à risque de victimisation. Or, une étude menée par Woodward, Fergusson et Horwood (2002) contredit cette idée. Ainsi, les auteurs notent que le risque de victimisation dans les relations amoureuses pour les jeunes adultes qui appartiennent à la première catégorie est plus élevé que pour ceux qui appartiennent à la deuxième catégorie, mais que ces derniers sont tout de même plus à risque d'être victimisés que les jeunes qui n'ont jamais manifesté de problèmes de comportement. Ces résultats suggèrent que des perspectives théoriques alternatives aux modèles dérivés des activités routinières et des styles de vie devraient être explorées.

Halpern et ses collègues (2009) ont examiné la pertinence de deux approches théoriques provenant de la criminologie pour prédire les facteurs de risque associés aux patrons longitudinaux de victimisation. La première était l'hétérogénéité de la population (« *population heterogeneity* »), dans laquelle s'inscrivent les théories des activités routinières et des styles de vie, et la seconde était la théorie de la dépendance (« *state dépendance* »). Cette théorie de la dépendance soutient que l'expérience d'un épisode de victimisation peut entraîner des changements sur les plans personnel et contextuel chez les victimes, ce qui en retour pourrait les rendre plus vulnérables aux expériences de revictimisation (Nagin et Paternoster, 2000; Ousey et Brummel, 2008). Halpern et ses collègues (2009) concluent que les résultats de leur étude offrent un certain appui empirique aux deux modèles. Clairement, d'autres études s'avèrent nécessaires afin de poursuivre l'analyse des processus impliqués dans les liens prédictifs des patrons longitudinaux de victimisation.

4.2 Autres contributions de la thèse

Cette thèse contribue à l'avancement des connaissances dans le domaine de la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles, notamment sur les plans théorique, conceptuel et méthodologique. Sur le plan théorique, cette recherche doctorale se distingue par le cadre développemental et contextuel employé. À cet égard, une des contributions importantes de la thèse est l'intérêt accordé à l'affiliation avec des pairs déviants en tant que facteur de risque associé à la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles. La référence aux théories des activités routinières et des styles de vie dans la prédiction de la victimisation constitue également une contribution originale. Malgré le fait que ces théories bénéficient de solides appuis empiriques en criminologie pour prédire la victimisation de tout ordre, peu d'études dans le domaine de la violence dans les relations amoureuses s'y sont intéressées.

Sur le plan conceptuel, une des forces de cette thèse est l'élaboration du concept de style de vie à risque à l'adolescence. Cette façon de procéder rappelle toute l'importance du phénomène de la cooccurrence des multiples problèmes de comportement mis en lumière par les travaux de Jessor (1991). Les études qui ont exploré les liens entre les problèmes de comportement et la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des jeunes n'utilisent généralement pas un tel construit. L'analyse approfondie de chacun des problèmes de comportement en lien avec la victimisation peut certes comporter certains avantages. Néanmoins, s'il apparaît plus judicieux de conceptualiser et d'adresser les problèmes de comportement en tant que syndrome unique, c'est principalement en raison du fait qu'ils partageraient des causes communes. Il s'agit d'un élément qui mériterait davantage d'être mis de l'avant dans les études qui examinent le lien entre les problèmes de comportement et la violence dans les relations amoureuses. En effet, ces études peuvent guider les travaux d'élaboration des programmes de prévention en la matière. Elles pourraient donc orienter les professionnels et chercheurs à considérer les facteurs étiologiques

communs aux divers problèmes de comportement, notamment l'affiliation avec des pairs déviants et la propension accrue à la déviance, en tant que cibles de prévention.

Enfin, au plan méthodologique, les apports de la thèse sont considérables. Tout d'abord, cette étude est l'une des premières à documenter les expériences de victimisation à deux périodes développementales distinctes, soient à l'adolescence et au début de l'âge adulte. Ensuite, à notre connaissance, elle est la seule à ce jour qui ait exploré de façon prospective la victimisation psychologique à ces deux temps de mesures. Plusieurs chercheurs reconnaissent d'ailleurs que la violence psychologique est souvent négligée dans les études (Barter, 2009; Jackson, 1999) et qu'elle est pourtant particulièrement pertinente pour mieux comprendre les conduites relationnelles difficiles des adolescents et jeunes adultes. De plus, les expériences de violence psychologique entraînent de la détresse considérable chez les victimes (Jouriles, Garrido, Rosenfield, et McDonald, 2009). La violence psychologique peut également se manifester de façon concurrente avec d'autres formes de violence et peut même en prédire l'occurrence (O'Leary et Smith-Slep, 2003; Sears, Byers, et Price, 2007). Ainsi, les études qui considèrent uniquement la violence physique et/ou sexuelle ne peuvent prétendre cerner le phénomène de la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des jeunes avec précision. Finalement, cette thèse s'appuie sur des données longitudinales provenant d'un échantillon issu de la communauté, ce qui représente un avantage par rapport à la majorité des recherches conduites dans le domaine. En effet, plusieurs études sont menées auprès de jeunes recrutés dans les écoles secondaires ou dans les milieux universitaires (Jackson, 1999). Or, les filles qui décrochent au plan scolaire sont plus à risque que celles qui poursuivent leur scolarité d'être victimes de violence dans leurs relations amoureuses (Vézina et Hébert, 2007). Par conséquent, les études qui portent sur des échantillons provenant des milieux scolaires peuvent sous-estimer l'ampleur réelle de la victimisation dans le contexte des relations amoureuses.

4.3 Limites et recherches futures

Malgré ses contributions notables à l'avancement des connaissances dans le domaine de la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles, cette thèse comporte certaines limites qui se doivent d'être soulignées. En premier lieu, la nature transversale des données qui concernent les facteurs de risque et la victimisation vécue à l'adolescence ne permet pas de statuer clairement de la validité de la séquence développementale inférée. Par conséquent, il est impossible d'écarter la possibilité que l'association avec des pairs déviants et l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque soient en réalité des conséquences de la victimisation plutôt que des antécédents, ou que ces facteurs agissent sur ces deux plans. Par exemple, une étude longitudinale démontre que les problèmes de comportement prédisaient, d'une part, la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des adolescentes et, d'autre part, que la victimisation augmentait les difficultés comportementales subséquentes (Roberts, Klein, et Fisher, 2003). Dans le but de clarifier la temporalité des facteurs étudiés dans cette thèse, des études longitudinales qui débuteraient au début de l'adolescence et qui permettraient de suivre l'évolution des jeunes jusqu'à la période de l'âge adulte seraient souhaitables. Ce type d'études offrirait l'opportunité d'explorer de façon plus détaillée comment la relation entre l'affiliation avec des pairs déviants, les problèmes de comportement et la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles varie dans le temps. En ce sens, certains des processus qui sous-tendent les expériences de victimisation répétées pourraient être mieux élucidés. Par ailleurs, il serait aussi pertinent d'examiner comment ces relations varient en fonction de la trajectoire développementale des comportements antisociaux empruntée par les filles (Moffitt, 1993). Il semble crucial de déterminer comment les problèmes de comportement qui émergent durant l'enfance peuvent mener à des expériences de victimisation et de revictimisation dans les relations amoureuses à l'âge adulte.

En deuxième lieu, il importe de rappeler que la proportion de la variance expliquée des deux formes de victimisation et ce, dans les deux études de la thèse, est

relativement peu élevée (entre 6% et 13%), quoique comparable avec d'autres études conduites dans le domaine (Eaton *et al.*, 2009; Wekerle *et al.*, 2001). Cela indique que d'autres facteurs qui n'ont pas été explorés dans cette thèse peuvent également être associés à un risque plus élevé de victimisation dans le contexte des relations amoureuses. Selon une perspective écologique (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), et tel que démontré dans la recension de la littérature réalisée par Vézina et Hébert (2007), des facteurs de risque de tout ordre (sociodémographiques, individuels, contextuels - liés à l'environnement : famille, pairs, communauté - et liés à la relation amoureuse), semblent être associés à la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles. Plus spécifiquement en lien avec les facteurs examinés dans cette thèse, il serait pertinent que les études futures incluent d'autres caractéristiques liées au groupe de pairs (ex. : composition du réseau : nombre et sexe des amis) et que l'influence des pratiques parentales soit analysée de façon plus approfondie. Une étude longitudinale québécoise révèle que les filles qui bénéficient d'un plus faible niveau de supervision parentale au début de l'adolescence fréquentent davantage d'amis de sexe masculin au milieu de l'adolescence, ce qui en retour entraîne davantage de problèmes de consommation d'alcool à la fin de l'adolescence (Poulin et Denault, sous presse). Il serait intéressant d'examiner si cette chaîne développementale peut mener vers des expériences de victimisation dans les relations amoureuses.

En troisième lieu, cette thèse s'est intéressée exclusivement à la victimisation. Or, un consensus qui semble maintenant bien établi dans la littérature est que la violence dans les relations amoureuses des jeunes est souvent de nature réciproque (Lewis et Fremouw, 2001). Selon une étude pionnière à cet égard, 66% des adolescents qui subissent de la violence sont à la fois des victimes et des auteurs de violence, comparativement à 14% des jeunes qui ne sont que victimes, et 20% qui ont perpétré de la violence sans être victimisés (Gray et Foshee, 1997). Il serait donc pertinent que les hypothèses soulevées dans cette thèse soient examinées dans le cadre d'études qui documentent autant la victimisation que la perpétration, et qui considèrent la violence mutuelle dans le contexte des relations amoureuses des filles.

Enfin, quoiqu'issus de la communauté, les échantillons utilisés dans cette thèse sont peu diversifiés aux plans socioéconomique et ethnoculturel, ce qui limite la généralisation des résultats à l'ensemble de la population adolescente et jeune adulte. Il serait ainsi souhaitable de répliquer ce type d'études auprès d'échantillons plus diversifiés, mais aussi à l'aide d'échantillons plus vastes afin de permettre d'examiner les différentes formes de victimisation séparément. Dans cette thèse, les résultats en ce qui concerne la violence psychologique versus la violence physique/sexuelle se sont avérés comparables. Toutefois, en raison de considérations statistiques, la violence physique et la violence sexuelle n'ont pu être examinées séparément. Il serait utile de poursuivre les travaux afin de déterminer si les facteurs de risque varient en fonction du type de victimisation. Il importe également de souligner à nouveau que certaines limites inhérentes aux mesures de victimisation utilisées (questionnaires référant à un seul partenaire et à une période restreinte d'un an pour la mesure à l'adolescence) ont pu entraîner une sous-estimation des taux de prévalence de la violence subie par les filles lors des deux périodes développementales à l'étude. Les recherches futures devraient, afin d'obtenir une estimation plus complète de la prévalence de la violence subie dans les relations amoureuses, considérer l'ensemble des expériences de victimisation vécues durant l'adolescence et le début de l'âge adulte. L'examen des contextes dans lesquels s'inscrivent les épisodes de violence, ainsi que des facteurs liés à la relation amoureuse (durée, niveau d'engagement émotionnel, etc.), permettrait également une meilleure compréhension de la problématique.

4.4 Conclusions et implications pour la prévention

Pour conclure, à l'instar de plusieurs autres études (Eaton *et al.*, 2009; Foshee *et al.*, 2004; Howard et Wang, 2003; Magdol *et al.*, 1998; Silverman *et al.*, 2001; Woodward *et al.*, 2002), les résultats de cette thèse révèlent que les problèmes de comportement dans l'enfance et l'adolescence constituent des facteurs de risque

associés à la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles à l'adolescence et/ou au début de l'âge adulte. Ces conduites extériorisées se sont également montrées associées à un risque accru pour les filles de subir des expériences de revictimisation, comparativement à n'avoir vécu aucune violence. Ces données comportent des implications pratiques importantes au plan des initiatives de prévention.

Il importe tout d'abord de préciser que la majorité des programmes de prévention existants sont de type universel, sont implantés dans les écoles secondaires, et visent généralement comme cible principale la réduction des attitudes favorisant la violence (pour une recension des programmes de prévention voir : Hickman, Jaycox, et Aronof, 2004; Lavoie, 2000; Wekerle et Wolfe, 1999; Whitaker *et al.*, 2006). Or, les données de cette thèse suggèrent que des mesures préventives spécifiques qui cibleraient les problèmes de comportement sont souhaitables. Fort heureusement, un programme de prévention qui vise à la fois la réduction de la violence dans les relations amoureuses et l'occurrence de certains problèmes de comportement (c.-à-d., consommation de substances psychotropes ainsi que des pratiques sexuelles à risque) a récemment été élaboré et implanté dans plusieurs provinces canadiennes (*Fourth R*: Wolfe, 2006). Ce programme destiné aux jeunes de secondaire II à IV vise à promouvoir le développement de relations saines et de choix responsables en matière de sexualité et de consommation de substances illicites. À notre connaissance, les données concernant l'impact de ce programme sur la réduction de la victimisation ne sont pas disponibles. Néanmoins, une étude expérimentale démontre que les garçons qui ont participé à ce programme infligent significativement moins de violence envers leur partenaire amoureuse deux ans et demi plus tard (Wolfe *et al.*, 2009). Ces résultats sont donc encourageants et prometteurs.

Par ailleurs, une autre avenue à privilégier, et ce afin d'adresser la relation entre les problèmes de comportement et la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses, serait que les programmes de prévention des conduites extériorisées incluent dans leur curriculum un volet portant sur la violence dans les relations amoureuses. Les comportements extériorisés, étant généralement plus visibles et

repérables que la violence dans les relations intimes, risquent davantage de bénéficier de mesures de prévention et d'intervention que les conduites relationnelles difficiles. Les acteurs impliqués dans les efforts de prévention de ces problématiques devraient ainsi être sensibilisés au phénomène de la violence dans les relations amoureuses. Il serait aussi pertinent, si impossible d'instaurer dans le programme un volet portant sur la violence dans les relations amoureuses, d'examiner si les efforts en matière de prévention des problèmes de comportement peuvent à eux seuls réduire l'occurrence de la victimisation. Des recherches en ce sens mériteraient d'être entreprises.

De surcroît, les résultats de cette thèse indiquent que l'affiliation avec des pairs déviants constitue un contexte social favorisant l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque et, par conséquent, de la victimisation dans les relations amoureuses des filles. Ces données suggèrent que les groupes d'adolescents plus déviants pourraient constituer une population cible auprès de laquelle implanter des mesures préventives de la violence. Recruter ces jeunes par le biais d'organismes communautaires ou tenter de les rejoindre dans les lieux publics qu'ils fréquentent seraient des façons novatrices de cibler cette clientèle qui souvent n'est plus scolarisée et ne bénéficie donc pas des programmes universels. À l'adolescence, l'acceptation par les pairs est au centre des préoccupations des jeunes (Cillessen, Schwartz, et Mayeux, 2011). Si le réseau d'amis fréquenté par les filles véhicule des attitudes et des comportements en faveur de la violence, celles-ci pourront avoir tendance à adopter leurs croyances et à se conformer à leur mode de vie. Par contre, si les pairs sont compétents sur le plan interpersonnel, ils peuvent s'avérer être des modèles efficaces de la promotion des relations égalitaires et du respect entre partenaires. Les parents peuvent également jouer un rôle actif dans la prévention de la violence dans les relations amoureuses de leur enfant. Par exemple, en assurant une supervision parentale adéquate, les parents peuvent réduire les probabilités que leur jeune se retrouve dans un environnement à risque de victimisation.

En somme, les résultats de cette thèse soulignent la pertinence que des mesures d'intervention préventives soient implantées tôt auprès des jeunes

adolescentes. Dès les premières relations amoureuses, le risque de victimisation est présent et peut mener vers la revictimisation au début de l'âge adulte. Prévenir et traiter, d'une part, les problèmes de comportement émergeant dans l'enfance et, d'autre part, l'adoption d'un style de vie à risque à l'adolescence simultanément avec la violence dans les relations amoureuses, semblent être des avenues prometteuses. Il est à espérer que les travaux entrepris en ce sens et ceux qui se doivent d'être élaborés seront mis à l'avant-plan dans les prochaines années. La promotion des relations amoureuses saines et harmonieuses chez les jeunes doit demeurer un enjeu dont il est important de se préoccuper.

RÉFÉRENCES

(CHAPITRES I ET IV)

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(Chapitres I et IV)

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APPENDICE A

ARTICLE I : VERSION PUBLIÉE DANS *JOURNAL OF YOUTH AND
ADOLESCENCE*

Risky Lifestyle as a Mediator of the Relationship Between Deviant Peer Affiliation and Dating Violence Victimization Among Adolescent Girls

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Abstract Few studies have explored the possible contribution of the peer group to dating violence victimization. The current study tested the hypothesis that a risky lifestyle would mediate the relationship between deviant peer affiliation and dating violence victimization among adolescent girls. The proposed mediation model was derived from lifestyles and routine activities theories. A sample of 550 girls (mean age = 15) drawn from a larger representative community sample in Quebec, Canada, completed a questionnaire on three forms of dating violence victimization (psychological, physical, and sexual). Results revealed that girls with a higher level of affiliation with deviant peers were more likely to endorse a risky lifestyle and reported higher rates of all forms of dating violence victimization. Further analyses showed

that, while deviant peer affiliation is associated with dating violence victimization, this relationship may be explained, at least partially for psychological violence, and completely for physical/sexual violence, by the girls' own risky lifestyle. Future preventive interventions for adolescent dating violence victimization should target deviant peer groups, as well as adolescent girls who display a risky lifestyle.

Keywords Dating violence · Victimization · Adolescent · Deviant peer affiliation · Risky lifestyle

Introduction

Dating violence victimization among adolescents is an alarming social and public health problem (Wolitzky-Taylor et al. 2008). Using representative national samples of American adolescents, past studies found that 29% of girls have experienced psychological violence, 12% have sustained physical violence (Halpern et al. 2001), and 4% reported having been forced by a dating partner to have sexual intercourse (Ackard et al. 2003). Similar rates of psychological and physical victimization have been documented among adolescent boys (O'Leary et al. 2008; Roberts et al. 2003). However, girls appear to be at greater risk of sexual victimization than boys are, and girls are also more likely to sustain physical injuries and to experience negative emotional effects (Barter 2009; Jackson 1999). The negative repercussions associated with dating victimization are quite varied and include eating disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, depressive symptoms, and suicidal behaviors (Ackard and Neumark-Sztainer 2002; Coker et al. 2000; Wolitzky-Taylor et al. 2008). Several authors have emphasized that factors associated with adolescent dating violence may vary by gender and thus should

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be examined separately for boys and girls (Foshee et al. 2004; Jackson 1999; Lewis and Fremouw 2001). The present study examined several factors associated with girls' dating violence victimization.

According to Lewis and Fremouw (2001), identifying factors associated with dating violence is a research priority. Indeed, a better understanding of these factors is likely to offer relevant clues for the elaboration of efficient preventive interventions. Recently, Vézina and Hébert (2007) reviewed the empirical literature on factors associated with dating violence victimization among young women. One important conclusion of their review is that girls displaying externalizing problems, labelled here as *risky behaviors*, may be more vulnerable to victimization in their first romantic relationships. Risky behavior refers to any behavior that can compromise the adolescent's physical and psychosocial health and development, such as substance use, risky sexual practices, antisocial behavior, and delinquency (Jessor 1991). Jessor's theory (1991) argues for the necessity of considering adolescents' risky behaviors as a cluster—a “risk behavior syndrome” reflecting a deviant or risky lifestyle—because risky behaviors tend to covary and could serve the same function for youths: to be valued within their social ecology (e.g., best friends, larger peer groups). However, the majority of studies that have tested the association between risky behaviors and dating violence victimization have only considered one form of problem behavior at a time (Foshee et al. 2004; Howard and Wang 2003).

While the association between risky behaviors and adolescent dating violence victimization among girls has been explored in past studies, the contexts in which these risky behaviors are rooted, and the association between these contexts and dating violence victimization, remains unclear. Social learning and socialization theories argue that risky behaviors, especially in adolescence, are learned and reinforced in the peer group (Elliott and Menard 1996). Several studies have shown that deviant peer affiliation increases adolescents' involvement in risky behaviors (see Vitaro et al. 2007, for a review). In fact, according to the taxonomic theory (Moffitt 1993), antisocial or risky behaviors can follow two courses: one trajectory characterized by antisocial behaviors beginning early in childhood and persisting through life, and one trajectory characterized by antisocial behaviors being limited to the developmental period of adolescence. The vast majority of antisocial girls belong to the second group (adolescence-limited: 18% vs. life-course-persistent: 1%; Moffitt and Caspi 2001). Moffitt (1993) suggested that a maturity gap, i.e., being biologically mature but not yet considered in the society as an adult, can contribute to explaining why some girls display risky behaviors in adolescence, while they did not display problem behaviors in childhood. For these girls, risky behaviors

may serve the functions of demonstrating autonomy from parents, gaining popularity among the peer group, and hastening social maturation. Thus, for the large majority of girls, their affiliation with deviant peers may precede their adoption of a risky lifestyle. Empirical support for this theory was found in studies completed by Moffitt and Caspi (2001) and by Boislard et al. (2009), who tested two alternative structural models (socialization model and selection model) to evaluate which model can best account for the emergence of risky sexual behaviors among Canadian and Italian adolescents. Results revealed that the socialization model, in which deviant peer affiliation precedes youths' problem behavior, was the most accurate to predict the emergence of risky sexual behaviors. The deviant peer group could thus serve as a context in which risky behaviors are displayed and maintained; consequently, deviant peer affiliation is a factor that needs to be examined in link with adolescent dating violence victimization.

Peer Group and Dating Relationships

Few studies have explored the possible contribution of the peer group to dating violence victimization (Barter 2009; Olsen et al. 2010; Vézina and Hébert 2007). This gap in the literature may reflect the fact that investigators studying victimization in adolescence and researchers studying romantic relationships have had, up to now, little contact with each other (Feiring and Furman 2000). Several authors have underscored the important contribution of the peer group to the development of “normative” adolescent romantic relationships (Brown 1999; Connolly et al. 2000). According to Brown (1999), romantic relationships change in form, essence, and function across different life stages. In adolescence, they “both shape and are shaped by the broader peer context in which they are rooted” (p. 291). Brown suggested that the norms governing romantic relationships can vary from one peer system to another. In fact, some peer groups may be more prone to tolerate and to legitimate violence in dating relationships. Data from the few longitudinal studies on this topic reveal that having friends who are experiencing dating violence in their romantic relationships may in fact be a significant predictor for dating violence victimization among adolescent girls (Arriaga and Foshee 2004; Foshee et al. 2004). Nevertheless, according to a recent review (Olsen et al. 2010), only scant data is available on the mechanisms through which peer relationship factors operate to predict violence in dating relationships.

Lifestyles and Routine Activities Theories

Lifestyles and routine activities theories suggest that the probability of any type of victimization increases in an environment where there is a convergence in time and space

of motivated offenders, suitable targets, and low guardianship, such as in adolescents' delinquent or deviant groups (Lauritsen et al. 1991). Criminological research focusing on lifestyle-routine activities theories has identified deviant peer group affiliation and risky lifestyle as important factors in association with various forms of victimization (e.g., violent victimization at school; Nofziger 2009). However, to our knowledge, no study has yet considered these two factors in relationship to adolescent dating violence victimization. Lifestyle-routine activities theories were previously used in the field of research on dating violence, but in regard to other social contexts than deviant peer group. For example, Gover (2004) found that living in a nuclear family and attending church several times a month could act as protective factors against risky behaviors, and then against dating violence victimization, as guardianship is expected to be higher with two parents at home, and the risk of affiliating with motivated offenders and delinquent peers is expected to be lower in religious institutions. Relying on lifestyles and routine activities theories offers a promising framework to document the factors associated with victimization in the context of early romantic relationships. Indeed, as Gover (2004) suggested, these theories may help us to better understand the social processes through which dating violence victimization is likely to occur.

The Current Study

The aim of the current study is to examine the contribution of the peer group to dating violence victimization among adolescent girls. While past studies have documented an association between risky behaviors and dating violence victimization, the potential contribution of deviant peer affiliation has never been considered in this context. Thus, the results of this study are likely to contribute to the literature and offer relevant practical implications for practitioners who are designing prevention programs for youth.

More specifically, the purpose of this study is to evaluate a model derived from lifestyles and routine activities theories (Cohen and Felson 1979; Hindelang et al. 1978) taking into account girls' deviant peer affiliation and risky behaviors. Following Jessor's theory, a construct of "risky lifestyle", combining risky sexual practices, drug and alcohol problems, and delinquent behaviors, was used. Our model was tested using three forms of dating violence victimization (psychological, physical, and sexual), which represents a methodological strength over past studies that have only considered physical violence. Based on both theoretical models and recent empirical findings, this study postulates risky lifestyle as a mediator of the link between deviant peer affiliation and dating violence victimization (psychological, physical and sexual). Thus, we expected

that girls who have a stronger tendency to affiliate with deviant peers are more likely to be victimized in their dating relationships than girls who do not tend to associate with deviant peers. In fact, we hypothesized that a higher level of affiliation with deviant peers is associated with a higher level of risky lifestyle, which, in turn, is linked to a higher probability for girls of being victimized in their dating relationships. Moreover, as several studies have highlighted, the important contribution of the family to the development of a risky lifestyle in adolescence and to adolescents' deviant peer affiliation (see Boyer 2006 for a review and Hovee et al. 2009 for a meta-analysis on the relationship between parenting and delinquency), parental knowledge was used as a control variable in this study, as well as aggression and disruptiveness in early childhood.

Method

Participants

Participants were drawn from a larger representative community sample of French-speaking kindergarten children in Quebec, Canada, during the 1986–1987 school years. Two thousand children were selected randomly (946 girls) and 1017 additional participants were retained to compose an at-risk sample (444 girls). These children were considered at risk for later adjustment problems because they scored at or above the 80th percentile (using sex-specific cutoff scores) on parent or teacher reports of the Social Behavior Questionnaire disruptive behaviors scale (SBQ; Tremblay et al. 1991). When they reached 15 years old, between 1995 and 1997, 1808 of them (929 girls) accepted to be interviewed and to complete questionnaires. The present analyses are based on data available for 550 girls who had a dating partner during at least 2 weeks in the past year and who answered a questionnaire on dating violence victimization. Almost a third of the girls were from the at-risk sample ($n = 174$; 31.5%). Girls were predominantly Caucasians, they were on average 15 years old ($M = 15.75$; $SD = .48$), and the majority were in Grades 9 or 10 (respectively 25 and 53%). Sixty-four percent of them lived in an intact family, 23% in a single-parent family, 12% in a blended family, and 1% lived in other situations (e.g., with their grand-parents, under the child protection service). Girls' socioeconomic status (SES) was average according to Blishen et al. (1987) occupational prestige scale ($M = 42.29$; $SD = 9.53$, based on data collected from 6 to 12 years old).

Procedure

When girls were in kindergarten, a first contact with their family was established through a letter sent to parents to

invite them to participate in the study. Questionnaires were then sent to the schools, and teachers were in charge of sending them to the parents (for the majority, to the mother). Written consent was required from the parent and the teacher. When girls reached age 15, a letter describing the study procedures and aims was sent to them at home. Research assistants then telephoned to schedule interviews for those who agreed to participate in the study. Before the interview, girls and their parents signed a written consent form. Interviews occurred in the girls' home, and participants received monetary compensation (girls received \$10 and parents received \$15). The study received internal review board approval from the University of Montreal.

Measures

Dating Violence Victimization

Girls who had been dating for at least 2 weeks during the past year completed a questionnaire on dating violence. The questionnaire covered psychological (six items), physical (seven items), and sexual violence (six items). If girls had more than one relationship in the past 12 months, they were asked to refer to the most difficult relationship to complete the questionnaire. Girls had to indicate how often during the past year, on a 4-point scale (0 = never; 1 = once or twice; 2 = 3 to 10 times; 3 = more than 11 times), they had experienced each of the behaviors presented. This version of the questionnaire was recently used by Hébert et al. (2008).

Psychological Dating Violence Victimization

Items on psychological violence were adapted from the Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory (PMWI; Kasian and Painter 1992). Girls were asked to report how often their boyfriend had prevented them from seeing or speaking to friends, humiliated them or "put them down", accused them of cheating on him, controlled their schedule and demanded a report on what they are been doing, acted cold or indifferent with them, or ordered them around. Results revealed an adequate internal consistency for this subscale ($\alpha = .73$). The six items were summed to obtain a total score. Then, the total score was dichotomized: all girls with a total score equal to or above 3 were assigned a score of 1, which meant that they reported sustaining multiple forms and/or repetitive acts of psychological violence; otherwise a score of 0 was assigned. Using this criterion, 154 girls (28%) reported having experienced psychological violence. The majority of these girls (95 out of 154 = 61.7%) obtained a score equal to 3 or 4.

Physical/Sexual Dating Violence Victimization

Items on physical violence were adapted from the Conflict Tactics Scales (CTS; Straus 1979) and items on sexual violence from the Sexual Experience Survey (SES; Koss and Gidycz 1985). For the physical subscale, girls were asked to report how often their boyfriend had thrown an object at them, pushed or shoved them, slapped them, kicked them, hit them with an object, beaten them up, or threatened them with a knife. For the sexual subscale, girls were asked to report how often their boyfriend used arguments and pressure, used alcohol or drugs, or threatened them to or used some degree of physical force to incite them to have sexual contacts (e.g. kissing, petting or fondling) or to have a complete sexual intercourse. For the physical and sexual violence subscales, the total scores were dichotomized. All girls who reported sustaining at least one act of violence from a dating partner were then assigned a score of 1; else a score of 0 was assigned. Using this criterion, 53 girls (9.6%) reported having experienced physical violence and 55 girls (10%) reported having experienced sexual violence. Of those reporting physical violence, the majority (32 girls out of 53 = 60.4%) reported one or two episodes of victimization, while more than half of the girls who were victims of sexual violence reported more than three incidents of victimization (30 out of 55 = 54.6%).

Silverman et al. (2001) emphasized that distinguishing between physical and sexual dating violence victimization may not be helpful in documenting factors associated with such experiences considering that sexual violence is less likely to occur in the absence of physical violence for adolescent girls. Thus, they conclude that a composite score offers a more informative approach when studying sexual dating violence victimization among adolescents. Following this rationale, a composite score of physical and sexual dating violence victimization was used for the purpose of the current study. Results revealed an adequate internal consistency of this composite score ($\alpha = .80$). Eighty-seven girls (15.8%) reported having experienced physical violence only, sexual violence only, or physical and sexual violence.

Deviant Peer Affiliation

To measure girls' deviant peer affiliation, a nine-item composite score was used. Girls were asked to report whether or not their best female friend had ever ran away from home, been expelled or suspended from school, and been arrested by the police. They were also asked whether they had ever been part of a gang that committed deviant acts. In addition, girls were asked how many of their friends had ever been arrested, smoked cigarettes, and used

drugs and alcohol, on a scale ranging from 0 (“none”) to 3 (“almost all of them” or “all of them”). Responses to the nine items were standardized (transformed into *z*-scores), and a mean score was computed ($\alpha = .70$). A higher score indicates a higher level of deviant peer affiliation.

Risky Lifestyle

A composite score of risky lifestyle referring to three forms of risky behavior (risky sexual behavior, drug and alcohol problems, and delinquent behavior) was used. For risky sexual behavior, girls were asked to report their age at first sexual intercourse (0 = never had sexual intercourse; 1 = had first sexual intercourse at 14 years old or later; 2 = had first sexual intercourse before the age of 14), their lifetime number of sexual partners, the number of “one night stands” they had during the past 12 months (0 = none; 1 = one or two; 2 = from 3 to 10; 3 = 11 and more) and the frequency at which they used condom (0 = never had sexual intercourse; 1 = always use condom; 2 = sometimes use condom; 3 = never use condom).

Alcohol and drug problems were measured using a 12-item scale from the work of Zoccolillo et al. (1999). Girls who had used alcohol or drugs more than 5 times were asked to report their substance use problems on a scale ranging from 1 (“never”) to 4 (“many times”). Each of the following problems was included in two questions (one pertaining to alcohol use, and the other to drug use): (a) went to school intoxicated, (b) got into fights while intoxicated, (c) drove a motor vehicle while intoxicated, (d) got into trouble with the police because of drugs or alcohol, (e) engaged in sporting activities while intoxicated, and (f) used drugs or alcohol before noon. Girls who had not used alcohol or drugs more than five times received a score of zero on each alcohol or drug problems items.

Delinquent behaviors were assessed using 17-items from the conduct disorder scale of the French version of the Diagnostic Interview Schedule for Children-2.25 (DISC-2.25; Breton et al. 1998). Girls had to report their delinquent behaviors in the past 12 months, including status offenses (e.g., ran away from home, had been expelled from school), property offenses (e.g., had stolen something in a store, had stolen from their parents), and violent offenses (e.g., had participated in a fight, engaged in acts of cruelty). Each item was dichotomized (0 = no; 1 = yes), a scale score was computed, and the mean score was used ($\alpha = .73$). Finally, to generate a composite score of risky lifestyle for each girl, the scores obtained for risky sexual behavior, alcohol and drug problems, and delinquent behaviors were standardized and then combined into a mean score. A higher score indicates that they had adopted a higher level of risky lifestyle. The composite score presents an adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .73$).

Aggression-Disruptiveness in Kindergarten

At the end of kindergarten, teachers completed the Social Behavior Questionnaire (SBQ; Tremblay et al. 1991) for each girl. For the purpose of the present study, the 13-item aggression-disruptiveness scale was used. Adequate psychometric properties of the SBQ have been well established (Tremblay et al. 1992). Each item (e.g., is restless; is disobedient; blames others; kicks, bites, or hits other children) was rated on a 3-point scale ranging from 0 (“does not apply”) to 2 (“applies often”). A mean score was computed ($\alpha = .91$), and a higher score indicates a higher level of aggression and disruptiveness in kindergarten.

Parental Knowledge

To measure parental knowledge, a six-item composite score was created. Girls were asked to report how many times do their parents know with whom they are when they are not at home, where they are, at what time they are coming back home and on what they are spending their time when they are at home, on a 3-point scale (1 = almost never; 2 = sometimes; 3 = almost always). Last, they had to report how important it was for their parents to know about their activities (1 = not important; 2 = a little important; 3 = very important). The six items were standardized, and the mean score was computed ($\alpha = .66$). A higher score indicates a higher level of parental knowledge.

Statistical Analysis

First, following the guidelines provided by Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), transformations were performed to achieve normality of scores for the following variables: parental knowledge (reflect and square root), deviant peer affiliation (square root), and risky lifestyle (logarithm). Next, descriptive statistics and bivariate analyses (correlations) were conducted to assess the relationships between the study variables. No significant relationships were found between sociodemographic variables and dating violence victimization scores. SES and family structure were thus not used as control variables in the main analyses (regression analyses). Finally, to evaluate whether risky lifestyle mediates the link between deviant peer affiliation and dating violence victimization (psychological and physical/sexual), a series of logistic regression analyses were conducted based on the procedures outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986). Control variables (aggression-disruptiveness in kindergarten and parental knowledge) were included in all regression analyses.

Results

Descriptive Analyses

Table 1 displays the frequencies, means, standard deviations, and correlations among the study variables. As hypothesized, both measures of dating violence victimization were associated with a higher score of affiliation with deviant peers and risky lifestyle, but only psychological victimization was associated with a lower level of parental knowledge. Not surprisingly, the correlation between deviant peer affiliation and risky lifestyle was strong. Psychological and physical/sexual dating violence victimization were moderately correlated, suggesting a certain degree of co-occurrence of victimization experiences.

Mediation Analyses

Baron and Kenny’s (1986) procedure stipulates that three conditions must be fulfilled to establish mediation. First, the predictor (deviant peer affiliation) must be correlated with the outcome (dating violence victimization). This step establishes that there is an effect that may be mediated, and logistic regression analyses were performed to test this assumption. Specifically, deviant peer affiliation and the control variables were regressed on each of the dating violence victimization subscales (Model 1 in Tables 2, 3). The second condition proposed by Baron and Kenny is that the predictor (deviant peer affiliation) must be correlated with the mediator (risky lifestyle). A linear regression was performed and showed that deviant peer affiliation was significantly associated with risky lifestyle ($\beta = .61, p < .001$). The third condition is that the mediator must affect the outcome, when controlling for the predictor in a regression analysis. To test this condition, all the variables were then regressed on each of the dating violence victimization subscales (Model 2 in Tables 2, 3). Finally, Sobel’s test (1982) of the indirect effect was conducted to assess if deviant peer affiliation predicted dating violence victimization, through the influence of risky lifestyle.

Predicting Psychological Dating Violence Victimization

Table 2 presents the results from the first and second models that examined the direct and indirect effects of deviant peer affiliation on psychological dating violence victimization. Model 1 showed that a 1-point increase in deviant peer affiliation was associated with a 2.06 increase in the odds of being victim of psychological victimization. None of the control variables was found to be significantly associated with psychological victimization. When risky lifestyle was included in a final model (Model 2), the effect of deviant peer affiliation on psychological dating violence victimization was reduced, but remained significant (odds ratio = 1.47, 95% confidence interval = 1.07–2.03). A 1-point increase in risky lifestyle was associated with a 2.11 increase in the odds of being a victim of psychological victimization, controlling for deviant peer affiliation. These results suggested that the link between deviant peer affiliation and psychological victimization was partially mediated by risky lifestyle. Sobel’s test (1982) of the indirect effect was significant ($z = 3.39, p < .001$). The final model was statistically reliable at $\chi^2(4, 541) = 51.47, p < .001$ and together, deviant peer affiliation and risky lifestyle accounted for 13% of the variance in girls’ psychological dating violence victimization.

Predicting Physical/Sexual Dating Violence Victimization

Table 3 presents logistic regression results examining physical/sexual dating violence victimization. Model 1 showed that a 1-point increase in deviant peer affiliation was associated with a 1.71 increase in the odds of being victim of physical/sexual victimization. None of the control variables was found to be significantly associated with this outcome. With the addition of risky lifestyle in the model (Model 2), the effect of deviant peer affiliation on physical/sexual dating violence victimization decreased and failed to reach statistical significance. However, a higher score on risky lifestyle was associated with a higher risk of being a victim of physical/sexual victimization, controlling for

Table 1 Descriptive statistics and correlations among the variables

Variables	% (N) or M (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Aggression-disruptiveness in kindergarten	3.21 (3.77)	–					
2. Parental knowledge	2.94 (.57)	.01	–				
3. Deviant peer affiliation	2.71 (.81)	–.01	.26***	–			
4. Risky lifestyle	1.71 (.62)	.03	.27***	.64***	–		
5. Psychological dating violence victimization	28% (154)	–.04	.12**	.26***	.28***	–	
6. Physical/sexual dating violence victimization	15.8% (87)	.01	.04	.17***	.20**	.38***	–

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 2 Summary of logistic regression analysis for variables predicting psychological dating violence victimization ($n = 541$)

	Model 1					Model 2				
	<i>B</i>	SE	W	OR	95% CI	<i>B</i>	SE	W	OR	95% CI
Aggression-disruptiveness in kindergarten	-.03	.03	.96	.97	.92–1.03	-.03	.03	1.14	.97	.92–1.03
Parental knowledge	.18	.18	1.10	1.21	.85–1.71	.11	.18	.37	1.12	.78–1.60
Deviant peer affiliation	.72	.13	29.17	2.06	1.59–2.68***	.39	.16	5.56	1.47	1.07–2.03*
Risky lifestyle						.75	.22	11.56	2.11	1.37–3.24**
Nagelkerke R^2	.10					.13				
Model χ^2	39.44***					51.47***				

W Wald statistic, OR odds ratio, CI confidence interval

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Table 3 Summary of logistic regression analysis for variables predicting physical/sexual dating violence victimization ($N = 541$)

	Model 1					Model 2				
	<i>B</i>	SE	W	OR	95% CI	<i>B</i>	SE	W	OR	95% CI
Aggression-disruptiveness in kindergarten	.00	.03	.01	1.00	.94–1.07	.00	.03	.00	1.00	.94–1.07
Parental knowledge	.43	.76	.33	1.54	.35–6.83	.22	.77	.08	1.25	.28–5.63
Deviant peer affiliation	.53	.16	11.57	1.71	1.25–2.32**	.25	.20	1.66	1.29	.88–1.90
Risky lifestyle						.60	.26	5.20	1.83	1.09–3.07*
Nagelkerke R^2	.05					.06				
Model χ^2	14.05**					19.84**				

W Wald statistic, OR odds ratio, CI confidence interval

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

deviant peer affiliation (odds ratio = 1.83, 95% confidence interval = 1.09–3.07). These results suggested that the link between deviant peer affiliation and physical/sexual victimization was totally mediated by risky lifestyle. Sobel's test (1982) of the indirect effect was significant ($z = 2.53$, $p < .05$), supporting the proposed mediational effect. The final model was statistically reliable at $\chi^2(4, 541) = 19.84$, $p < .01$, and together deviant peer affiliation and risky lifestyle accounted for 6% of the variance in girls' physical/sexual dating violence victimization.

Discussion

For most youth, the first romantic relationships are central in their life and positively contribute to the normative developmental tasks they are facing during adolescence (Furman and Shaffer 2003). Unfortunately, for a number of teenagers their very first romantic relationships are instead tainted by violence and linked with a host of negative experiences and long-lasting repercussions. Up to now, few studies have relied on a developmental perspective to better understand the risk factors linked to adolescent dating violence. For example, while the crucial role of peers in the emergence of first romantic relationships has been

acknowledged in the scholarly literature on adolescent development, few empirical reports have explored the influence of peers as a possible factor associated with dating violence victimization. This study aimed to document the links between deviant peer affiliation, risky lifestyle and dating violence victimization using a large community sample of adolescent girls. Considering the possible role of deviant peer groups and risky lifestyle in dating violence victimization may offer insightful clues as for the identification of vulnerable youths as well as orient future prevention initiatives.

In this study, almost 30% of girls reported having sustained psychological dating violence within the past year and approximately 1 in 5 girls (15.8%) reported having been physically and/or sexually victimized. These prevalence rates compare with those reported in prior studies of adolescent dating violence victimization (Halpern et al. 2001; Howard and Wang 2003; Silverman et al. 2001). This study examined risky lifestyle as a possible mediator of the relationship between deviant peer affiliation and dating violence victimization (psychological and physical/sexual) among adolescent girls. The proposed model was derived from lifestyle-routine activities theories and the statistical analyses included parental knowledge and aggression-disruptiveness in childhood as control variables. Our model

was tested using logistic regression analyses, which provided support for our hypotheses concerning both psychological and physical/sexual dating violence victimization.

As predicted, our data revealed a significant link between deviant peer affiliation and dating violence victimization. The girls who reported a higher level of affiliation with deviant peers were more likely to be victimized in their dating relationships, but this association was mediated by the girls' own risky lifestyle. Partial mediation was found when predicting psychological dating violence victimization, as affiliation with deviant peers was associated with psychological violence both directly and indirectly, through risky lifestyle. For physical/sexual dating violence victimization, a complete mediational model was supported. Results showed that a higher level of affiliation with deviant peers was associated with a higher level of risky lifestyle, which, in turn, was linked to a higher probability for girls of being physically and/or sexually victimized.

Our results are consistent with past research linking risky behaviors (e.g., antisocial behavior, substance use, risky sexual practices, and delinquency) and dating violence victimization. In this study, however, the concept of "risky lifestyle" was used in line with lifestyle-routine activities theories (Cohen and Felson 1979; Hindelang et al. 1978) and Jessor's (1991) theory that suggests the clustering of adolescents' risk behaviors. Multiple forms of risk behaviors, such as risky sexual practices, alcohol and drug problems, and delinquency, were thus included in our analyses to form a unique risky lifestyle composite score. Using a nationally representative sample of US adolescent girls in Grades 9 through 12, Howard and Wang (2003) found an at-risk profile among adolescent girls who were victims of physical dating violence. In fact, these girls engaged in a pattern of risky practices (violent behaviors, illicit substance use, and risky sexual behavior) that supported the concept of the clustering of risk behaviors proposed by Jessor's work (1991). Recently, Eaton et al. (2007) have also highlighted the importance of considering the co-occurrence of risk behaviors in the prediction of adolescent dating violence victimization. In fact, the authors found that the odds of dating violence victimization among girls went up as the number of their risk behaviors increased.

In this study, risky lifestyle, as expected, was strongly and positively linked to deviant peer affiliation. This finding is consistent with past studies that showed that adolescent girls are more likely to engage in risky behaviors if they affiliate with deviant peers (French and Dishion 2003; Moffitt and Caspi 2001; Scaramella et al. 2002). In the current study, we linked deviant peer context to lifestyle-routine activities theories and we found some support, like Gover (2004) did, for the relevance of these frameworks to gain a better understanding of dating violence victimization. Our findings suggest that, while deviant peer

affiliation is associated with dating violence victimization, this relationship may be explained, at least partially for psychological violence, and completely for physical/sexual violence, by the girls' own risky lifestyle. Indeed, spending time with deviant peers may offer social opportunities for girls to participate in leisure activities without appropriate supervision (e.g., parties, park loitering, isolated settings), which are characterized by low levels of guardianship, and may also increase their involvement in routine activities that are characterized by the adoption of risky behaviors. In addition, the routine activities taking place in deviant groups (e.g., using substances, partying) may increase the probability that girls meet and bond with antisocial boys, which would in turn increase the odds that they engage in a dating relationship with these boys. Being in a dating relationship with an antisocial partner would be equivalent to dating a motivated offender, thus increasing the likelihood of being victimized in the context of a dating relationship. In fact, prior studies have found that antisocial boys tend to be more violent with their romantic partners than normative boys (Capaldi and Clark 1998; Capaldi et al. 2001).

Study Limitations

The findings of the current study should be interpreted in light of the following limitations. First, we inferred causal links among our variables; however, our data was cross-sectional and correlational. Consequently, we cannot confirm the chronology involved in the relationship between deviant peer affiliation, risky lifestyle, and dating violence victimization. Although we described deviant peer affiliation and risky lifestyle as predictors for dating violence victimization, it is also possible that they are outcomes of that victimization. Longitudinal research is needed to clarify the temporality of these factors.

Second, our sample was predominantly Caucasian and middle-class, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to a broader population of adolescent girls. Nevertheless, the girls who participated in the study were drawn from a community sample, which allowed us to include in our study some girls who may be at greater risk of experiencing dating violence (e.g., dropout girls; Vézina and Hébert 2007) and who could not have been reached with a school-based sample, which represent a major improvement over past studies relying on school samples.

Third, girls' reports of peers' deviancy and parental knowledge may be influenced by response bias. Future work would thus benefit from gathering data directly from peers and parents. In addition, future studies may need to document more thoroughly the friendship network and its relationship to risky lifestyle and dating violence victimization. For example, Lacasse et al. (2003) showed that

girls who have more male friends are more likely to experience moderate and severe potentially offensive sexual behaviors than girls who have fewer male friends. Thus, the gender composition of the peer group may be a relevant factor to explore in future studies.

Finally, although our model was empirically supported, the variables considered in this study explained only 13% of the variance in psychological dating violence victimization and 6% of the variance in physical/sexual victimization. While these proportions of explained variance are similar to those reported in prior studies in the field of adolescent dating violence (Eaton et al. 2007; Wekerle et al. 2001), they are still low. This suggests that other variables that were not explored in the present study may exert a significant influence.

Practical Implications of this Study

Despite the limitations of this study, our results have several practical implications. First, our findings bring some support to Ehrensaft's (2008) recommendation to link the research programs on partner violence and on the development of youth antisocial behavior. Ehrensaft suggested that programs for the prevention of partner violence should be inspired by research on the prevention of antisocial behavior. She highlighted that one of the most important contributions made by this latter field of research is the shift from universal prevention strategies to intervention strategies that fit varying levels of risk (e.g., *Adolescent Transitions Program*; Dishion and Kavanagh 2003). Vézina and Hébert (2007) have also underlined the relevance of targeting subgroups of adolescents who appear to be at greater risk of being victimized in their dating relationships. In accordance with several studies (Foshee et al. 2004; Howard and Wang 2003; Silverman et al. 2001), our results suggest that adolescent girls who engage in a risky lifestyle should be targeted by preventive interventions for dating violence.

Another noteworthy implication of this work is that our findings indicate that peer ecologies need to be considered in the elaboration of preventive measures for violence in romantic relationships among adolescent girls. Our findings thus support the ideas proposed by Arriaga and Foshee (2004), who recommended specifically for adolescent girls that prevention strategies take into account the potential influence of friends. Peers contribute to the formation of youths' romantic norms and expectations because they can play the role of model, confidant, and counsellor, and also because being accepted by peers is a major preoccupation for adolescents. Deviant peer groups should then be considered as an interesting target population for the implementation of preventive measures.

Conclusion

This study provided support for a model in which risky lifestyle—risky sexual behavior, alcohol and drug problems, and delinquency—partially mediated the relationship between deviant peer affiliation and dating violence victimization when psychological victimization was the outcome, and completely mediated this relationship when the outcome was physical/sexual victimization. Future studies on adolescent dating violence should adopt a developmental framework and include peer contexts as an attempt to better understand, prevent, and treat this disquieting phenomenon. Our findings suggest that deviant peers may play a role in dating violence victimization among adolescent girls and, consequently, that prevention and intervention efforts should target deviant peer groups, as well as adolescent girls who display a risky lifestyle.

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