

VIOLENCE IN SEXUAL AFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG ADOLESCENTS HOSTED INSTITUTIONALLY

VIOLENCIA EN LAS RELACIONES AFECTIVAS SEXUALES ENTRE ADOLESCENTES ACOGIDOS INSTITUCIONALMENTE

VIOLÊNCIA NOS RELACIONAMENTOS AFETIVOS SEXUAIS ENTREADOLESCENTES ACOLHIDOS INSTITUCIONALMENTE

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Submission: 13-12-2023**Approval:** 27-01-2025**ABSTRACT**

INTRODUCTION: experiencing intrafamily violence has been a significant factor associated with the establishment and perpetuation of violent romantic and sexual relationships among adolescents. **OBJECTIVE:** this current study aims to understand the socially constructed representations of adolescents living in shelters regarding violence in romantic and sexual relationships and to identify the elements that influence these representations. **METHOD:** it is an study exploratory, descriptive, and qualitative exploration of the influence of intrafamily violence experiences on the formation of such relationships. **RESULTS:** conducted in a care facility in Recife (PE) with 9 participants, the study utilizes data from records, interviews, and participant observation. The Theory of Social Representations guides the analysis, revealing that neglect, psychoactive substance use, and sexual violence are common reasons for admission. Several adolescents witnessed conjugal violence among their caregivers, influencing their perspectives on relationships. **CONCLUSION:** the analysis highlights the impact of social representations in normalizing violence in adolescent relationships, emphasizing the need for social actions to critically examine concepts of violence and gender constructions that perpetuate violent practices among partners.

Keywords: Adolescent; Violence; Relationships; Host Institution.

RESUMEN

INTRODUCCIÓN: la experiencia de violencia intrafamiliar ha sido un factor importante asociado al establecimiento y perpetuación de relaciones afectivo-sexuales violentas entre adolescentes. **OBJETIVO:** el presente estudio tiene como objetivo comprender las representaciones socialmente construidas de los adolescentes alojados sobre la violencia en las relaciones afectivo-sexuales e identificar los elementos que influyen en estas representaciones. **MÉTODO:** es un estudio exploratorio, descriptivo y cualitativo, y aborda la influencia de la experiencia de violencia intrafamiliar en la formación de relaciones afectivo-sexuales violentas entre adolescentes. **RESULTADOS:** se llevó a cabo en una unidad de acogida en Recife (PE) con 9 participantes, utilizando datos de expedientes, entrevistas y observación participante. La Teoría de las Representaciones Sociales guía el análisis, revelando que la negligencia, el uso de sustancias psicoactivas y la violencia sexual son motivos comunes de acogida. Varios adolescentes fueron testigos de violencia conyugal entre sus cuidadores, lo que influyó en sus percepciones sobre las relaciones. **CONCLUSIÓN:** el análisis destaca la influencia de las representaciones sociales en la normalización de la violencia en las relaciones adolescentes, enfatizando la necesidad de acciones Sociales para problematizar conceptos sobre la violencia y construcciones de género que perpetúan prácticas violentas entre parejas.

Palabras clave: Adolescente; Violencia; Relaciones; Institución de Acogida.

RESUMO

INTRODUÇÃO: a vivência de violência intrafamiliar tem sido um importante fator associado ao estabelecimento e perpetuação de relacionamentos afetivos sexuais violentos entre adolescentes. **OBJETIVO:** o presente trabalho objetiva compreender as representações socialmente construídas dos adolescentes abrigados acerca da violência nos relacionamentos afetivo-sexuais e identificar os elementos que influenciam estas representações. **MÉTODO:** trata-se estudo exploratório, descriptivo e qualitativo aborda a influência da vivência de violência intrafamiliar na formação de relacionamentos afetivo-sexuais violentos entre adolescentes. **RESULTADOS:** realizado em uma unidade de acolhimento em Recife (PE) com 9 participantes, o trabalho utiliza dados de prontuários, entrevistas e observação participante. A Teoria das Representações Sociais guia a análise, revelando que a negligência, uso de substâncias psicoativas e violência sexual são motivos comuns de acolhimento. Vários adolescentes testemunharam violência conjugal entre seus responsáveis, influenciando suas visões sobre relacionamentos. **CONCLUSÃO:** a análise destaca a influência de representações sociais na banalização da violência nos relacionamentos adolescentes, ressaltando a necessidade de ações sociais para problematizar concepções sobre violência e construções de gênero que perpetuam práticas violentas entre parceiros.

Palavras-chave: Adolescente; Violência; Relacionamentos; Instituição de Acolhimento.



INTRODUCTION

The family is considered an institution responsible for providing, educating and influencing the behavior of children in their social environment. However, violations of the rights of children and adolescents most often occur within the family and can make it impossible for them to remain with their family of origin ⁽¹⁾.

Violence against adolescents, due to their vulnerability, can be translated as a potential stressor for the process of physical, cognitive, social and psychological growth and development. Experiencing or witnessing intrafamily violence can result in psychological harm, developing or accentuating symptoms of psychological distress that can be associated with emotional dysregulation in adolescents ⁽²⁾.

A violent family environment has been characterized as a factor that directly interferes with the experience of adolescence, especially because it is a significant period of human development, permeated by physical, psychological and social transformations. These structural changes, although expected, can somehow make the adolescent vulnerable to the risks arising from victimization. Psychological theories refer to the syndrome of normal adolescence, that is, from the perspective of mental health, adolescence is a phase that can be marked by reactions that are potentially susceptible to triggering problems because it is directly linked to processes of definition, social insertion and vulnerabilities ⁽³⁾.

children and adolescents, initiatives were created to promote the prevention and confrontation of violations of their rights. According to the ECA, Law No. 8,069 of 1990, children and adolescents should not be subjected to any form of neglect, discrimination, exploitation, violence, cruelty and oppression ⁽⁴⁾.

Among the protective measures is institutional care, a provisional and exceptional measure applied to children and adolescents whose rights are threatened or violated by action or omission of society/State, by failure of parents or guardians, or due to their own conduct ⁽¹⁾.

According to recent studies, domestic violence has been an important factor in the perpetration of violent sexual relationships. In Brazil, studies have indicated an association between domestic violence and dating violence among adolescents ⁽⁵⁾.

Identifying dating violence among adolescents is a problem that requires attention, in addition to being an important and likely predictor of violence in marital relationships. In Brazil, in 2020, there was an increase in femicide compared to 2019, with 81% of cases being committed by an intimate partner or ex-partner. It is important to reflect that dating violence is based on a social construction of power and the consequences of this phenomenon can be devastating, reproducing adult relationships permeated and perpetrated by violence, both in the role of victims and perpetrators of violence ⁽⁶⁾.

In addition to what has already been discussed on the topic of domestic violence

In order to ensure full protection for



against adolescents, it is essential to provide visibility to the situation of adolescents who are institutionalized, in even more vulnerable conditions due to their very condition as institutionalized adolescents and victims of intimate partner violence. In this context, inequalities and vulnerabilities are both triggering factors and favoring rights violations in adolescents' sexual and emotional relationships. Scientific data indicate that a large proportion of children and adolescents who have been subjected to traumatic experiences such as abandonment, homelessness, and domestic violence have lived a large part of their lives in institutional care as a consequence of their victimization and have faced re-victimizing situations such as the breakdown of interpersonal bonds, the rupture of significant relationships, and disruptions in their psychological, emotional, and social development process ⁽⁷⁾.

In this sense, the Theory of Social Representations (TSR) allows us to understand the representations constructed by adolescents, facilitating knowledge about their feelings, their development processes and acting in the world from a perspective that unites the subject with the object, the individual with the collective ⁽⁸⁾.

Therefore, the present study aims to understand the socially constructed representations of sheltered adolescents regarding violence in affective-sexual relationships and to identify the elements that influence these representations.

METHOD

This is an exploratory, descriptive and qualitative study that uses the theoretical foundation of the Theory of Social Representations (TSR), which allows us to understand the phenomenon of violence in affective-sexual relationships and how these are represented by victimized adolescents who are sheltered under protective measures, focusing on the dynamics of social relationships. This type of research works with the universe of meanings and aims to understand and describe in depth the social dynamics of groups, as well as the events of those who are their protagonists ⁽⁹⁾.

This study used components of ethnography, such as participant observation (PO) and recording techniques such as the field diary. Fieldwork should be based on PO, stating that a society can only be revealed through patient immersion in the lives of the individuals studied. PO can be considered an essential part of fieldwork in the qualitative area. This process is defined by the presence of the observer in a social situation, with the purpose of conducting a scientific investigation. The observer must be face to face with those being observed, and by participating in their lives, in their cultural setting, he/she collects data ⁽¹⁰⁾.

A qualitative and ethnographic research instrument, the Field Diary allows the systematization of research practices, as it is accompanied by an analysis based on the social mapping of the context in which the action, problem or study occurs. This instrument allows



the recording of notes where the observer will report what he/she observed and what is not the object of any type of interview. This makes the field research more reliable ⁽¹¹⁾.

The study was conducted in a shelter in the Campo Grande neighborhood, in the city of Recife-PE. The city has 15 shelter service units that house children and adolescents aged 0 to 18 years ⁽¹²⁾. The study field was formed by one of the shelters located in the city of Recife-PE: Casa Vovó Geralda. This institution was chosen for convenience and because it is a state-run shelter that maintains a partnership between the Secretariat for Social Development of the State of Pernambuco and the Center for Studies on Violence of the University of Pernambuco (NEVUPE) and is a reference in sheltering the population in the age range of the research.

The chosen unit has a maximum capacity to serve 20 children and adolescents, however, it operates above this capacity. Among those sheltered, there are also children and adolescents with special needs. The support team is quite diverse and is composed of: a coordinator, professionals with higher education (pedagogue, social worker and psychologist), educator/caregiver, educator/caregiver assistant and outsourced mid-level professionals who work in the kitchen, cleaning and security.

The study included adolescents of both sexes, aged 10 to 19 years. The inclusion criteria were adolescents with preserved cognitive capacity, sheltered in the institution for more than 30 days. The time frame is justified because this period is considered a critical moment for

the adaptation and engagement of adolescents in the activities and routines offered by the shelter service. The number of participants in the semi-structured interviews was determined through saturation sampling and comprised eleven participants.

The data collection period took place from January to May of 2019. Entry into the field was through participant observation of the practices already developed in the institution. In other words, the researchers began a process of observing the daily activities of the individuals sheltered. Gradually, this approach became an important tool in creating and strengthening bonds with the team of professionals and adolescents, which facilitated communication and consequently carried out more effectively and reliably in data collection.

Another collection instrument was the semi-structured individual interview, based on the theoretical premise that this instrument allows greater flexibility and freedom for different positions⁽¹³⁾.

The interview consisted of questions that addressed the participants' knowledge about the types of relationships most common in adolescence, their representations of violence in intimate relationships and, finally, gender issues that imply victimization of violence. With the participants' consent, a recorder was used to record the interviews, as a way of ensuring the reliability of the statements, as well as greater engagement between the researchers and the interviewees. The interviews were then transcribed and analyzed using the discourse



analysis (DA) technique as a theoretical framework.

Discourse analysis is a scientific methodological procedure that allows access to a variety of approaches in the study of texts, seeking to understand them in a way that is articulated with their conditions of production. The meanings of language expressed in the relationships between subjects and the meanings attributed to it based on the social, historical and cultural conditions in which the discourse is produced are strongly considered in the data analysis process ⁽¹⁴⁾.

Using this technique, we sought the system of meaning that revealed the representations constructed, at the discourse level, by the group of adolescents. According to Guimarães and Paula ⁽¹⁴⁾, the process of producing discourses occurs through the conversion of narratives that are assumed by the subject of the enunciation. Through this technique, we attempt to question the meanings that the subjects produce, which can be verbal and non-verbal, as long as their materiality produces meanings for interpretation. Therefore, DA aims to problematize the forms of reflection already established, creating its own point of view of looking at language as a social space for debate and conflict.

This study is part of a larger project entitled “Vulnerability, gender, violence and the determinants of health in adolescence” approved by the Research Ethics Committee (CEP), under opinion 2,265,027. To preserve the confidentiality of the participants' identities, they

were identified by acronyms where the letter A refers to girls, the letter O to boys and the numbering according to the order in which the respective interviews were conducted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristic data of the study participants:

Among the adolescents who met the study inclusion criteria, 9 were interviewed, 5 girls and 4 boys aged 11 to 15 years. Of these, 2 were 11 years old, 2 were 12 years old, 2 were 13 years old and 3 were 15 years old.

The reasons for the foster care of the adolescents participating in the study were the following: neglect (8), use of psychoactive substances by the adolescent (5), sexual exploitation (1), homelessness (3), physical violence (3), sexual violence (5) and child labor (1). It is worth noting that 2 adolescents witnessed physical domestic violence.

According to the graph above, it is possible to identify the different reasons for institutional care. Neglect is the most frequent, followed by the use of psychoactive substances by adolescents and sexual violence. It is important to emphasize that adolescents can present more than one justification for care simultaneously.

Three empirical categories were listed and will be presented below, summarized from the discourses revealed in the narratives that inform about the conceptions about violence in the affective-sexual relationships of the adolescents in care. The categories identified in



the semi-structured interviews and in the FGs were:

VIOLENCE IN AFFECTIVE-SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS: FROM EXPERIENCE TO TRIVIALIZATION:

This category is represented by texts that highlight violent situations experienced by adolescents in the context of their intimate relationships and their naturalization process.

The various types of exposure to violence have negative impacts on the mental health of adolescents, regardless of the context. They can be expressed in different ways: depression, anxiety, risky sexual behavior, somatization, aggressive behavior, physical violence, etc. Cases of violence are directly associated with the increase in mental disorders ⁽¹⁵⁾.

Intimate relationships characterized by mistreatment between partners are very common among young Brazilians, with the most prevalent forms of violence being psychological and sexual ⁽¹⁶⁾. According to the WHO ⁽¹⁷⁾, Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is defined as “behavior by an intimate partner that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviors”.

The various forms of violence can result in temporary or permanent damage to both physical and mental health, such as trauma to the physical body, isolation, restlessness, silent pain, fear, frustration, shame, feelings of inferiority,

among others. All situations of violence leave incurable consequences, however, psychological violence can alter the victim's behavior ⁽⁸⁾.

Among the 9 adolescents participating in the study, 5 were identified as having experienced violence in their current and/or past affective-sexual relationships, either as victims and/or aggressors.

Then he "drank" and snorted cocaine, it seems. Then he... he wanted to take my virginity "by force". Then, since I didn't want to, he "hit" me with his hand. Then I had to run away... with my mother... (A1)

For me, it is. This happens to me almost every time. (About hitting) (A4) No, he came down from there punching me a lot and threatening me (A2).

The statements above represent experiences of violence experienced by adolescents in their relationships. When asked whether physical violence is common in relationships, A4 (15 years old) says yes. This is a consequence of the frequency with which aggressions occurred in her relationship.

Most of the adolescents interviewed justify the practice of violence in sexual relationships based on jealousy or motivated by the demand for fidelity. This shows us that both boys and girls point to infidelity, real or merely supposed, as the main trigger for conflicts and aggressions in relationships. This justification leads to the trivialization of violence and the imbalance of power in gender roles ⁽¹⁸⁾.

No. Yes and no. Because... it's...

jealousy... there are fights... (A1)

Because... it's, they hit... with... that... sometimes they... it's... it makes them jealous, it makes them angry, it's like... then they hit (A1)

[...] no, it can't. But, as if the boyfriend or girlfriend is jealous, it will have to happen [...] jealousy - Justification for violence. (O1) [...] Because of many fights and jealousy (O2)

[...] I don't know. It was because of jealousy [...] sometimes, many times it's because of jealousy

[...] I said... and... I don't know, one provoking the other (A4)

beating the other. (A5) [...] death happens, beatings, a lot of things, getting beaten [...] (O1)

[...] he goes to the beach, his girlfriend starts fighting, then when he gets home, he goes to talk to his girlfriend, she hits him and he hits her, she hits him. (O4)

[...] arguments, fights, one hits the other, yeah... one insults the other, says that the ones at work are better [...] and I say that the ones at school are better [...] then this causes conflicts, then it ends up me and him making out every time... and the educators let us make out [...] we've already made out here, I picked up a tile [...] to throw at him (A4)

[...] We fought. He only hit me. twice. Because I deserved it, you know? But after that, we got along fine. We were just. we just lived [...] (A2)

The discourses of the adolescents participating in the study brought about a reflection on the trivialization of violence, a phenomenon described in the literature as violence that is seen as something intrinsic to being a man ⁽¹⁹⁾.

The various forms of violence experienced by the participants in this study reveal the inequality related to generation and gender, which determines intrafamily violence, which is structural for individuals and for relationships in society. The violence they experience, suffer and witness, in the domestic and public spaces, contributes to the naturalization and reproduction of violence to be perpetrated against boyfriends/girlfriends and other people with whom they live ⁽²⁰⁾. The naturalization can be identified in the following excerpts:

[...] it's one hitting the other, one

The previous statements, for the most part, are examples of what the daily life of a teenage couple is like. Teenager A2 (15 years old) highlights two points in her statement: she shows that the fact that she has suffered aggression twice is a small number by using the word “only” and she presents a feeling of guilt, believing that she deserved to suffer physical aggression from her boyfriend.

It is possible to identify that the cycle of domestic violence consists of three phases, and this feeling of guilt reported by A2 is explained in the first phase called Tension Building. In this phase, daily tensions are accumulated by the aggressor, who does not know or is unable to resolve them, creating a dangerous environment where the victim is blamed for these tensions that can arise for simple reasons in the couple's

coexistence ⁽²¹⁾.

[...] He (boyfriend) is... for example... he can beat his wife, he can... yeah... there are some who are also... "rapes"... "tortures" his wife" [...] (A1)

It is clear from A1's statement that, possibly because she has witnessed domestic

violence, she believes that the opposite sex in the position of boyfriend/husband can attack women in a variety of ways, including engaging in sexual relations without consent, which constitutes rape. A1 and A3 are adolescents who witnessed domestic violence and both suffered and/or committed violence in romantic-sexual relationships, as identified in the following table:

Table 1 - Reproduction of dating violence according to the testimony of domestic violence. Recife, 2019.

Witnessed domestic violence	Reproduced/Suffered dating violence			
	Sim		Não	
	n	%	n	%
YES	4	22,2	6	33,3
NO	5	27,8	3	16,6
Source: Elaborated by the authors.				

TESTIMONY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AS A PREDICTOR OF VIOLENCE IN INTIMACY RELATIONSHIPS:

This category groups discourses that have in common the naturalization of violent events due to witnessing parental violence.

Domestic violence has been the subject of numerous studies around the world, due to its various forms of expression and also due to the consequences for the couple and the family ⁽²²⁾. Since the beginning of the discussion on the risk factors for dating violence, witnessing intraparental violence has been pointed out as an indisputable factor for its perpetration in dating relationships. It is possible to associate early adverse experiences with the quality of romantic bonding and violent behavior in intimate relationships ⁽²⁰⁾.

According to Pinheiro ⁽²⁰⁾, experiencing violent behavior in the family of origin, as well as children being victimized by their parents, makes them a significant predictor of violence with intimate partners. Emphasizing that children and adolescents who witnessed mistreatment present a risk factor associated with violence against women.

Data from this study indicate that 100% of the adolescents who witnessed domestic violence committed and/or suffered violence. It is also possible to identify that all female participants suffered violence in affective-sexual relationships.

[...] Yeah... yeah... in my city I had a guy with benefits that I used to hang out with [...] (A1)

In the previous statement, A1 refers to a

relationship she had in her hometown. This “friend” is a 32-year-old adult, which constitutes a situation of violence suffered by the adolescent. However, she did not identify it, as she sees it as something natural. According to autor ⁽²³⁾, female children and adolescents are more likely to suffer sexual violence, and the risks to which they are exposed, which may vary according to their stage of development, make younger girls become targets because they have less experience, maturity and physical strength than adults.

Relationships with older partners, as in the case of adolescent A1, are permeated by the perception of power of the partner, which can be expressed through physical and psychological violence, as well as through the existence of dependence on financial resources. These relationships can begin when the adolescents are under 14 years of age, which can constitute rape of a vulnerable person. The fact that they are in a romantic relationship does not change the inequality of the relationship, given that they are at different stages of development ⁽²⁴⁾.

GENDER STANDARDIZATION IN THE CONCEPTION OF ADOLESCENTS IN SOCIETY:

Socially produced gender violence is related to the historical and economic process of the formation of society. The ideologies produced can imprint a conservative or transformative sense of the dominant conceptions. Gender stereotypes favor the formation of binary and hierarchical identities and thus underpin

inequalities between men and women ⁽²⁵⁾.

A society governed by a patriarchal system establishes traditional gender standards that can be observed from childhood. Strengthening a process of feminization and masculinization that begins, girls grow up with the image and responsibility of carrying with them obedience, sensitivity, delicacy, submission, among others. Whereas boys are the holders of strength and power ⁽²⁶⁾.

With all these characteristics, women, faced with the division of labor, pre-established by society, are seen as the only ones responsible for domestic chores and demands. It is also possible to identify a strong discourse in the speeches of adolescents when discussing the division of labor related to gender. Despite the visible daily struggle of women for emancipation ⁽²⁷⁾.

[...] So, there are... there are men who don't even know who... who the person is, right? And they start threatening... "If I get home and there's no food ready, I'm going to do this and that to you." So I think these threats they make to women are not right. (A2)

[...] yeah, I went to fight with him. But I couldn't handle him, he's bigger than me. So to defend myself I went to break the window [...] I don't know, because it's more fragile (woman). (A4)

[...] because almost every time they're weaker than us (O3) [...] because women nowadays need to be watered like a flower, not beaten up [...] but there are several couples who don't accept the end of the relationship and kill their wives [...] (A5) [...] The girl is better behaved. (A3)

The excerpts above reveal the idea that adolescents have about the fragility of the female sex in relationships. According to the speech of A3 (13 years old), it is identified that the adolescent created a representation in the face of cases of violence in sexual affective relationships, where only the man commits the violence and the woman, due to the historical social construction, presents herself in relationships in a submissive way or, using the adolescent's words: "well-behaved".

[...] he's tougher [...] he can't control his anger [...] No (about men not suffering violence). (A4)

[...] Yes, the ones who suffer the most violence are women [...] Because of the issue of strength and because they only want to solve things by attacking, right? And also because men are... they have more strength than women. Men also have more character than women, you know? [...] Like, they have more experience with fighting, with how to fight, you know? Than women. Because they don't... some don't fight, those things, right? To learn the deadly moves, those things... (A2)

Given all this construction, adolescents present the idea that men do not suffer violence. They only practice it against women because they are stronger, tougher, have more experience in fighting environments, etc. Following the logic that men are educated to be violent, because they are judged as powerful over women (19).

According to author (19), physical and sexual violence are the most common types

practiced by men, while verbal violence is the type most practiced by women. Based on the lesser physical strength that women have, speech is an easier way to attack.

[...] because everywhere I went, my ex always followed me, to see what I was doing, who I was hanging out with, who I stopped hanging out with. So, we ended the relationship because of that. Because he wanted to control me, my parents didn't control me, did he want to control me? [...] (A5)

Adolescent A5, 15 years old, sees her past relationship as a form of violence through the exercise of power by her boyfriend. In other words, based on the idea of gender inequalities in society, men exercise dominance in public and private spaces, consolidating practices in which they recognize themselves as the owner of their partners, making them submit to their desires and needs, often naturalizing these actions through this patriarchal system (28). This naturalization of women's submission is interrupted by the adolescent who, in her speech, makes clear her dissatisfaction with being subjected to her boyfriend's desires.

The meanings shape the social figure of the feminine and thus determine subordination and domination (25). Corroborating this statement, the 16th Brazilian Public Security Yearbook (FBSP) revealed that every hour, 26 women suffer physical aggression in the country. In 2021, 370,209 emergency protective measures were granted, representing a growth of 13.6% compared to 2020. Regarding sexual violence, 61.3% of victims were up to 13 years old and in

79.6% of cases the perpetrator was known to the victim ⁽²⁹⁾.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The adolescents participating in the study have had lives marked by domestic violence, whether as victims or witnesses, and their representations of violence in sexual relationships reveal the naturalization of this violence, justified by most of the study participants with the allegation of jealousy and infidelity.

The results reveal that the adolescents have a belief in male superiority and an acceptance of female submission, present in both the reports of the boys and the girls.

It is possible to identify that the social environment prior to the adolescents' experience in the foster care institution directly interferes in the construction of their social representations in relation to violence in sexual relationships.

Although it was not the focus of the study, it was possible to confirm that all the female participants suffered sexual violence, a structuring condition for sexual relationships. This important fact emphasizes the need for more studies on sexual violence committed against children and adolescents, specifically those who live in foster care institutions.

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Authorship criteria (authors' contributions)

1 – Andreia Lopes Ferreira de Lima -

Contributed substantially to the conception and planning of the study; Obtained, analyzed and interpreted data; Standardized the rules according to the journal. 2 – Camila de Mattos Oliveira - Contributed substantially to the conception and planning of the study; Obtained, analyzed and interpreted data. 3 – Eliane Maria Bezerra - Critical review of the text, adding significant parts of the work. 4 – Lygia Maria Pereira da Silva - Contributed substantially to the conception and planning of the study; Obtained, analyzed and interpreted data; Revised the text.

Declaration of conflict of interests

Nothing to declare.

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