



Therapeutic intervention for victims and perpetrators of dating violence: a systematic review

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RESUMEN: El objetivo de este estudio fue realizar una revisión sistemática de las intervenciones terapéuticas para víctimas y victimarios de violencia en el noviazgo en adolescentes y jóvenes, publicadas entre 1997 a 2019 en español, inglés, francés y portugués. La búsqueda se llevó a cabo por dos investigadores de manera independiente en SCOPUS, EBSCO, PsycINFO, ScienceDirect, Redalyc, Web of Science, Pubmed, Proquest y búsquedas manuales. Se seleccionaron diez intervenciones terapéuticas para víctimas y victimarios de violencia en el noviazgo. La mayoría de los programas fueron desarrollados en Estados Unidos y tres en Iberoamérica. En general, estas investigaciones reportan efectos significativos en la reducción de violencia en el noviazgo. Sin embargo, se considera necesario que en las próximas intervenciones se evalúe el cambio conductual y su efecto sobre la revictimización a corto y largo plazo a partir de diseños experimentales en diferentes contextos o comunidades.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Tratamiento psicológico, Violencia en el noviazgo, Revisión sistemática, Víctimas, Victimarios.

Intervención terapéutica para víctimas y victimarios de violencia en el noviazgo: una revisión sistemática

ABSTRACT: The aim of this study was to carry out a systematic review of therapeutic interventions for victims and perpetrators of dating violence among adolescents and young people published between 1997 to 2019 in Spanish, English, French and Portuguese. The search was conducted by two independent researchers in SCOPUS, EBSCO, psycINFO, ScienceDirect, Redalyc, Web of Science, Pubmed, Proquest and manual searching. Ten therapeutic interventions were selected for victims and perpetrators of dating violence. Most of the programs were developed in the United States and three in Ibero-America. In general, these investigations report significant effects in reduction of dating violence. However, it is considered necessary for the next interventions to evaluate the behavioral change on short and long term and their effects in revictimization based on experimental designs in different contexts or communities.

KEYWORDS: Psychological treatment, Dating violence, Systematic review, Victims, Perpetrators.

Dating violence has generated a high interest in recent years, due to the high reported prevalence rates and the related physical and mental health difficulties, which has caused this phenomenon to be considered a public health problem to be prevented from adolescence

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(Leen et al., 2013; Ludin, Bottiani, Debnam, Solis & Bradshaw, 2018; Mercy & Tharp, 2015; Peterson et al., 2018; Temple, Le, Muir, Goforth & McElhany, 2013; Sánchez-Jiménez, Muñoz-Fernández & Ortega-Rivera, 2018; Wilson et al., 2019; Ybarra, Espelage, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Korchmaros & Boyd, 2016). A systematic review carried out with 101 studies on prevalence of dating violence among adolescents revealed that between 1% and 61% of participants had perpetrated or had been victims of physical violence, and that between

a little less than 1% and 54% had been victims of sexual violence, these rates being higher among older adolescents (Wincentak, Connolly & Card, 2017).

Another systematic review carried out with 113 studies of dating violence prevalence perpetrated and received, among adolescents and young adults (Rubio-Garay, López-González, Carrasco & Amor, 2017) found that between 8.5% and 95.5% of the participants had been victims of psychological violence, between 0.4% and 57.3% of physical violence and between 0.1% and 64.6% of sexual violence, while between 4.2% and 97% of participants had perpetrated psychological violence, between 3.8% and 41.9% physical violence and between 1.2% and 58.8% sexual violence. In addition, the results of these studies show that dating violence occurs bi-directionally in a significant number of cases (Alegría & Rodríguez, 2015, Rubio-Garay et al., 2017, Sánchez-Jiménez et al., 2018).

Although these prevalence rates vary according to the questionnaires used, the types of dating violence examined and the duration of romantic relationships reported show that a significant number of adolescents and young adults can experience dating violence, which have the potential to generate negative consequences in their physical and mental health (Wincentak et al., 2017). Among the physical and mental health difficulties associated with dating violence victimization are depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, alcohol and drug use, unhealthy weight control behaviors, suicidal ideation, sexual risk behaviors and academic problems (Copp, Giordano, Longmore & Manning, 2016; Foshee, McNaughton, Gottfredson, Chang & Ennett, 2013; Lormand et al., 2013; Ludin et al., 2018; Parker, Johnson, Debnam, Milam & Bradshaw, 2017; Peterson et al., 2018; Rubio-Garay, Carrasco, Amor & López-González, 2015). Hébert, Lavoie, Vitaro, McDuff and Tremblay (2008), found that the risk of presenting an internalizing disorder was 10 times higher, among 774 Canadian teenagers who had a history of victimization of child sexual abuse and dating violence, being seven times higher in the case of externalizing disorders.

Despite these high prevalence rates and

the physical and mental health difficulties associated with victimization, in the specialized literature there is very little reference to the alternatives of psychological treatment for victims and perpetrators of this form of violence (Mercy & Tharp, 2015; Temple et al., 2013). The existing efforts have focused on prevention, but in this field the studies indicate that the developed programs have, in general, a positive impact on the knowledge of this phenomenon, with a decrease in the attitudes and beliefs that promote violence, but they do not report the impact of these programs on the behavior of individuals or it is less (Leen et al., 2013; Martínez & Rey, 2014). Sánchez-Jiménez et al. (2018), for example, evaluated a multi-component prevention program through a controlled clinical trial in which 1764 Spanish students from 12 to 19 years old participated, finding that this program had increased knowledge on the subject and had diminished attitudes and beliefs about romantic love that promoted this type of violence, but had not had a positive impact on the aggressive behavior of the experimental group participants or on victimization.

A systematic review by Leen et al. (2013), on prevention and intervention programs of dating violence directed at adolescents, published between 2000 and 2011, found a total of nine studies describing primary and secondary prevention programs implemented in the United States or Canada, most of them which had been designed for educational environments, in order to develop skills for the improvement of couple relationships with different pedagogical approaches, but none corresponded with treatment programs aimed at victims or perpetrators of this type of violence. Another systematic review carried out with 13 studies describing the empirical evaluation of dating violence prevention programs found that in most of these studies an evaluation of their impact on the behavior of individuals was not carried out or implemented (Martínez & Rey, 2014).

De La Rue, Polanin, Espelage and Pigott (2017), carried out a meta-analysis with the results reported in 23 studies on programs developed in middle and high school institutions

in the United States, which showed results significant in the knowledge and attitudes of the participants, but little behavioral change, drawing attention to the need to generate intervention alternatives that improve the skills of adolescents and the witnesses of this form of violence. According to the results of these three systematic reviews, despite the prevention campaigns, it is possible that many adolescents and young adults are victims and or victimizers of this form of violence and, could affect in their physical and mental health (Wincentak et al., 2017).

Psychotherapy or psychological treatment is conceptualized as a systematic set of scientifically supported activities that seek to modify habits to improve the physical and mental well-being of people, minimizing psychological distress (American Psychological Association, 2019). Therefore, psychological treatment could be a valid alternative for the intervention of dating violence, at least in two senses: (a) to diminish the psychological consequences of mistreatment in the victims, intervening directly on the symptoms of depression, anxiety, somatic and other frequent in this population and (b) to interrupt this type of behavior in perpetrators or victims, through strategies aimed to modify intrapersonal and interpersonal variables that lead to this type of behaviors, such as knowledge of this phenomenon, attitudes and beliefs about dating violence, problem-solving skills, self-esteem, or alcohol and drug consumption.

In accordance with the above and in order to identify the existence and characterize the efforts aimed at the psychological treatment of victims and perpetrators of dating violence at the international level, the aim of this study was to carry out a systematic review of therapeutic interventions for victims and perpetrators of dating violence among adolescents and young people published between 1997 to 2019 in Spanish, English, French and Portuguese.

METHODS

For the elaboration of the present systematic review, the guidelines of methodology Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) were considered (Liberati et al., 2009; Urrútia & Bonfil, 2010).

•SEARCH STRATEGY

The searches were conducted by two authors of the present study independently from April 1st to 20th, 2019, in eight electronic sources: SCOPUS, EBSCO, PsycINFO, ScienceDirect, Redalyc, Web of Science Core Collection, Pubmed and Proquest. In addition, manual searches were carried out (from the identification of articles of the references of selected studies).

Key words consulted in the Medical Subject Headings (MeSH) and the Health Sciences Descriptors (DeCS) were included in the title or in the summary in the following languages: (a) Spanish: Violencia en el noviazgo OR violencia en parejas jóvenes OR malos tratos en el noviazgo AND intervención OR terapia OR tratamiento; (b) English: Dating violence OR courtship aggression AND intervention OR therapy OR treatment; (c) French: Violence dans les couples OR violence dans les fréquentations AND intervention OR thérapie OR traitement, and (d) Portuguese: Violência de namoro OR Agressão no namoro AND intervenção OR terapia OR tratamento.

•ARTICLES SELECTION

The inclusion criteria were established based on the criteria of PICOS format (Perestelo-Perez, 2013): (a) description of the participants: adolescents or young people of both sexes from 12 to 31 years old, single, in a current or previous dating relationship, without cohabiting; (b) type of study: therapeutic interventions for victims and perpetrators of dating violence; (c) comparators: studies that include or not the comparison of groups of interventions (e.g. experimental group and control group); (d) description of results: effectiveness and feasibility of interventions for victims and perpetrators of dating violence and (e) type of design: experimental and pre-experimental designs, and studies that present the design of the program and have not been evaluated the effectiveness of the intervention program.

Original research articles published between January 1st, 1997 and April 15th, 2019, were considered about therapeutic programs or interventions of perpetrators or victims of dating

violence with publication status (published and in press), in Spanish, English, French and Portuguese. Articles that included married or cohabiting couples were excluded.

• DATA EXTRACTION

The data extraction was carried out independently by two authors of the present review. Consensus meetings were held to decide the inclusion and exclusion of each articles. Subsequently, the following information was collected and analyzed: (a) aim intervention program; (b) country of origin; (c) range and average age of the participants; (d) sample size; (e) number of sessions; (f) topics or components; (g) study design; (h) theoretical framework; (i) scope and (j) limitations. The agreement index was calculated by Cohen's Kappa.

RESULTS

The systematic review was conducted in eight sources, making 27 combinations with the keywords selected for this study, which resulted in a total of 216 searches in the title and summary fields, retrieving 2794 articles (see Table 1). Of these, 1068 articles were filtered (after eliminating repeated records), which were reviewed and analyzed according to the established protocol (see Figure 1).

Of the 1068 articles reviewed, ten nine articles that met the search criteria were selected, describing the characteristics of population, type of study, design and implementation of therapeutic interventions for victims or perpetrators of dating violence (see tables 2 and 3). To evaluate the concordance of selected articles, Cohen's Kappa index was calculated, with a result of .91, considered as very good. In the following

Table 1
Total of records identified and removed after duplicates by source and keyword combinations

Source	Keywords	Records identified	Records after duplicates removed
EBSCO ^b	Violencia en el noviazgo OR violencia en parejas jóvenes OR malos tratos en el noviazgo AND intervención OR terapia OR tratamiento	4	2
	Dating violence OR courtship aggression AND intervention OR therapy OR treatment	936	216
	Violência de namoro OR Agressão no namoro AND intervenção OR terapia OR tratamento	5	1
PsylINFO ^{a,b,c}	Dating violence OR courtship aggression AND intervention OR therapy OR treatment	31	9
	Violencia en el noviazgo OR violencia en parejas jóvenes OR malos tratos en el noviazgo AND intervención OR terapia OR tratamiento	7	3
Science Direct ^c	Dating violence OR courtship aggression AND intervention OR therapy OR treatment	187	58
	Violence dans les couples OR violence dans les fréquentations AND intervention OR thérapie OR traitement	9	5
	Violencia en el noviazgo OR violencia en parejas jóvenes OR malos tratos en el noviazgo AND intervención OR terapia OR tratamiento	97	53
Redalyc	Dating violence OR courtship aggression AND intervention OR therapy OR treatment	129	78

Table 1 (Continuation)
Total of records identified and removed after duplicates by source and keyword combinations

Source	Keywords	Records identified	Records after duplicates removed
Web Of Science ^{a,b,c}	Violência de namoro OR Agressão no namoro AND intervenção OR terapia OR tratamento	81	53
	Dating violence OR courtship aggression AND intervention OR therapy OR treatment	32	4
Pubmed ^{a,b,c}	Dating violence OR courtship aggression AND intervention OR therapy OR treatment	265	115
Proquest	Violencia en el noviazgo OR violencia en parejas jóvenes OR malos tratos en el noviazgo AND intervención OR terapia OR tratamiento	5	2
	Dating violence OR courtship aggression AND intervention OR therapy OR treatment	508	313
	Violence dans les couples OR violence dans les fréquentations AND intervention OR thérapie OR traitement	7	6
Total	Violência de namoro OR Agressão no namoro AND intervenção OR terapia OR tratamento	2795	1068

Note: ^a No results were found with the keywords in Spanish, ^b No results were found with the keywords in French, ^c No results were found with the keywords in Portuguese.

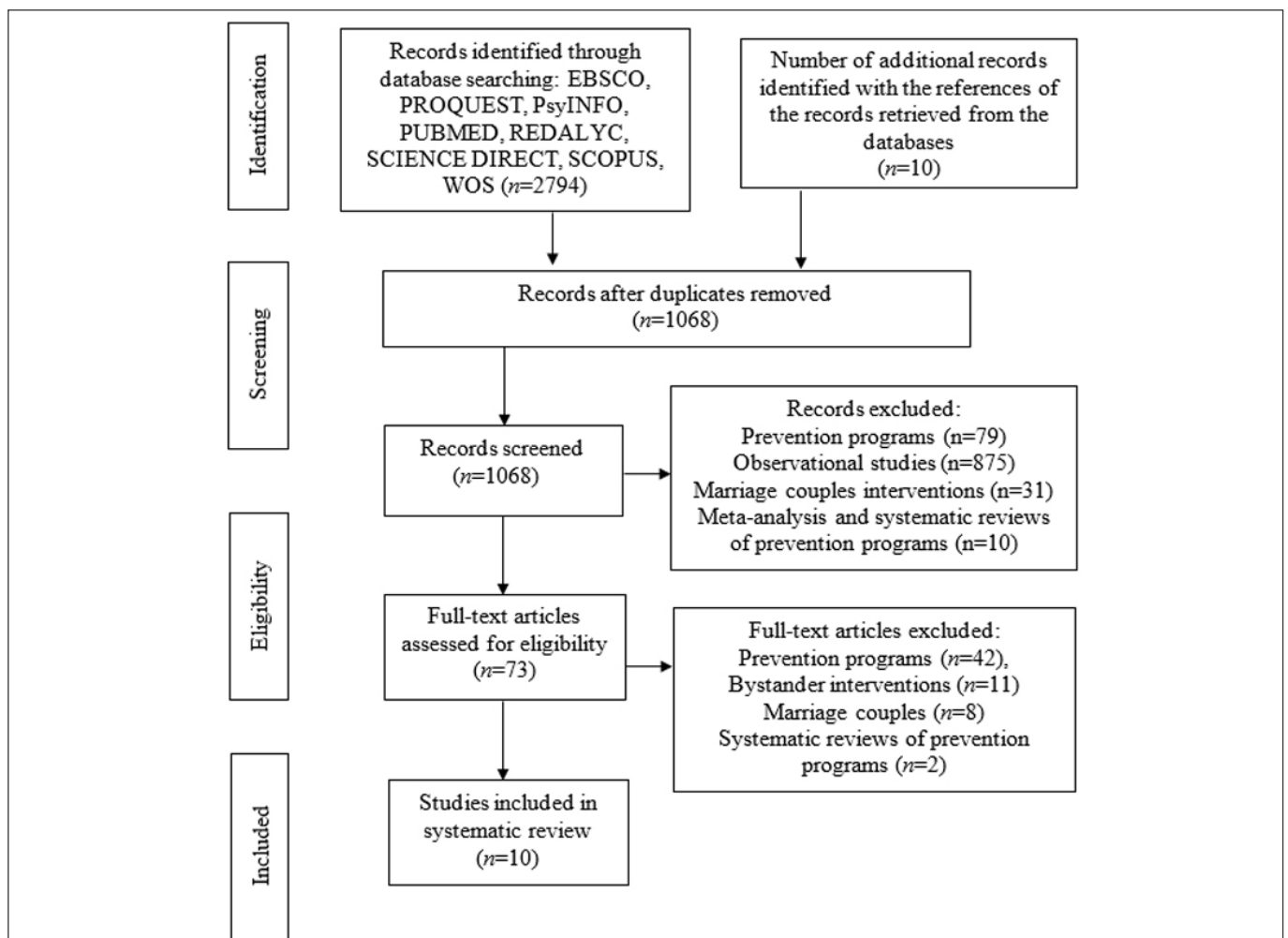


Figure 1. Flow chart of the selection of studies of dating violence interventions

Table 2
Description of intervention programs for victims and perpetrators of dating violence

Author and year of publication	Country of origin	Sample	% of women	Range of age	Mean age (SD)	Aim of the study
Villafañe et al., 2010	PR	10 women who have been victims of DV	100	21 to 31	-	To develop a model of group counseling for women victims of DV.
Woodin & O'Leary, 2010	UE	50 university couples who have experienced DV	58	18 to 25	19.64 (1.26)	To evaluate the effectiveness of motivational interviewing in couples experiencing DV in their current relationships.
Cunningham et al., 2013	UE	397 adolescents who presented DV and alcohol use	64.5	14 to 18	16.8 (1.3)	To determine the efficacy of a brief intervention program in patients who reported DV.
Guajardo & Cavazos, 2013	MX	A university woman victim of DV	100	21	-	To Present an intervention based on the model focused on the solutions and cognitive behavioral.
Peskin et al., 2014	UE	766 high school students	57.8	-	13 (0.54)	To determine if the program "It's your game ... Keep It Real" (YIG) reduces DV among young people from high schools of ethnic minorities, at high risk of DV.
Rey-Anacona et al., 2014	CO	4 heterosexual couples who have presented DV	50	17 to 22	20 (1.8)	Design, implement and preliminarily evaluate a behavioral intervention program, aimed at unmarried couples who reported DV.
Glass et al., 2015	UE	300 women victims of DV	100	18 to 24	-	To evaluate the effectiveness of an interactive application in university women victims of DV and friends of women who experience VN.
Rothman et al., 2016	UE	36 adolescents who have perpetrated DV	74	15 to 19	-	To reduce the perception and perpetration of DV.
Rizzo et al., 2018	UE	109 girls who have been victims or perpetrated pshysical DV	100	14-17	14.9	To assess the feasibility, acceptability and efficacy of an intervention to reduce dating violence and sexual risk behaviors.
Draucker et al., 2019	UE	14 college women who have presented DV	100	18 to 25	-	To design an internet-based theoretical intervention for adults experiencing DV.

Note: CO=Colombia, MX=Mexico, PR= Puerto Rico, UE=United States. The hyphen (-) means that no information was provided. DV= Dating Violence.

Table 3
Methodological characteristics of intervention programs for victims and perpetrators of dating violence

Author and year of publication	Number of sessions	Topics or components	Study design	Theoretical fundament
Villafañe et al., 2010	20	Self-concept, self-esteem, management of loneliness, fear, shyness, decision-making, empathy and support.	Qualitative with a phenomenological approach	TTV, FT, BCT y CT
Woodin & O'Leary, 2010	2	Building healthy relationships, communication skills, asking for help, functioning of the relationship and harmful effects of aggression.	Experimental with control group, pretest-posttest and follow-up of 9 months	MI

Table 3
Methodological characteristics of intervention programs for victims and perpetrators of dating violence

Author and year of publication	Number of sessions	Topics or components	Study design	Theoretical fundament
Cunningham et al., 2013	-	Role-play about the handling of discussions, conflict management and information about emergency telephones in case of DV.	Randomized controlled trial	MI
Guajardo & Cavazos, 2013	8	Overcoming and learning the previous relationship, increasing personal security and self-esteem, increasing psychological well-being.	Case study	BCT
Peskin et al., 2014	AC y 12 CL	Development of healthy relationships, identification of the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy friendships, peer pressure, social support.	Randomized trial with a control group and an experimental group	SCT
Rey-Anaconda et al., 2014	10	Beliefs and expectations about the couple's relationship, communication skills, empathy, anger management and jealousy.	Pretest-posttest of one group	BCT
Glass et al., 2015	-	Healthy relationships, safety priorities, seriousness of violence, danger in the relationship and decision-making.	Randomized controlled trial, pretest-posttest and 12 months follow-up	-
Rothman et al., 2016	-	Perception of the perpetration of DV, development of behavioral techniques to reduce the perpetration of DV.	Randomized controlled trial with one month follow-up	SCM, TPB y MI
Rizzo, et al., 2018	6	Self-assessment, cognitive restructuring, problem solving, emotion regulation strategies targeted to anger, jealousy and sadness.	Experimental and Knowledge-Only group and follow-up of 9 months	BCT
Drauker et al., 2019	4	Externalization and Therapeutic Narrative Practices.	Pretest-posttest of one group	TEA, TIN

Note: The hyphen (-) means that no information was provided. DV= Dating Violence, AC= Activities in the classroom, CL= Computer lessons. TTV= Theory of Transgenerational Violence, FT= Feminist theory, MI=Motivational interview, BCT= Behavioral Cognitive Theory, CT= Choice Theory, SCT= Social Cognitive Theory, TPB= Theory of Planned Behavior, SCM= Stages of Change Model, TEA= Theory of Emerging Adolescence, TNI= Theory of Narrative Identity.

paragraphs, each article is reviewed emphasizing its content and methodology.

Woodin and O'Leary (2010) developed and evaluated a brief motivational intervention aimed at couples who presented aggressive physical behaviors, to reduce the harm to the victim. The participants were 50 couples (18 to 25 years old) of Stony Brook University, who reported at least one conduct of physical violence in their relationship. The participants had to enter a Web platform to complete a series of online selection questionnaires and then, the pairs were randomly assigned to two groups: (a) an experimental group, which received individualized motivational

feedback on physical aggression and the risk factors of dating aggression, and: (b) a control group, which received minimal and non-motivational comments about dating violence. Follow-up assessments were conducted at three, six, and nine months. Study participants received cash compensations for their participation.

The results suggest that in the experimental group compared to the control condition, there was a significant reduction in physical violence and alcohol consumption in both men and women. In addition, participants of the experimental group, predicted less anxiety and greater long-term commitment to the relationship. These results

show that a brief motivational intervention is a useful and quick strategy to work with couples who are at high risk of dating violence.

Similarly, Villafañe et al. (2010) proposed and evaluated the effectiveness of a group counseling model for single female university students (21 to 31 years old) who had been victims of violence in their relationships at the University of Puerto Rico. On average the participants (10 participants) attended 20 sessions. The main objective of the study was that the participants would be empowered of their personal, academic and social activities that would allow them to improve their quality of life. This process and group work lasted approximately one year and a half. The intervention proposal was based on: (a) Transgenerational Transmission of Violence Theory; (b) Feminist Theory; (c) Cognitive-Behavioral Theory; (d) Person-Centered Theory, and (e) Choice Theory.

The analysis of the results followed the guidelines of the emerging theory, making qualitative descriptions from categories emerging from the content of the interviews and the narratives given by the participants in the counseling sessions. As results, it can be mentioned that: (a) the participants recognized co-dependence as a negative element in dating relationships and modified interaction patterns to prevent violent behavior; (b) the participants realized how their behaviors contributed to both positive and negative interactions within the couple relationships and (c) how the impact of the program in their lives point to the handling of emotions, the modification of behavior, increase in knowledge, self-value and decision making.

Cunningham, et al. (2013) showed the effectiveness of the implementation of a brief motivational program (SafERteens), in adolescents who reported dating violence, one year after having consulted the emergency department of a hospital. The program includes strategies to prevent intimate partner violence through role-plays. Participants were adolescents between 14 and 18 years old, who attended the emergency department of a hospital and who had experienced peer violence, dating violence and alcohol consumption in the last year. For the study three experimental conditions were formed. The first a computer training, the second

a computer training plus the accompaniment by a therapist, and the third a control group where they were given a brochure with information; the participants were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions, where it was stratified by sex and two age groups: (a) 14 and 15 years old and (b) 16 to 18 years old. The investigators were blinded to the participant's intervention condition. The adolescents were followed up at three, six and twelve months after receiving the experimental condition. The computer-animated program incorporated role plays that were presented from situations that were aimed at identifying anger management and conflict resolution strategies. Finally, participants were given a brochure with telephone numbers of help when dating violence occurred.

The results demonstrated that the participants who received computer training showed a reduction in the frequency of victimization behaviors at three and six months after the intervention, in comparison with the control group that received the information brochure. In case of adolescents who received computer training plus accompaniment by a therapist, they showed significant differences at six months and twelve months, compared to control group and the group with the condition of computer training, in dating violence moderate and severe.

On the other hand, Guajardo and Cavazos (2013), implemented a brief intervention focused on Cognitive-Behavioral Solutions with a 21-years-old Mexican woman, university student, victim of violence and sexual abuse by her boyfriend. The intervention was developed in eight sessions and two follow-up calls, where goals were worked out such as: (a) overcome and learn from the relationship where she was a victim of violence by her partner; (b) increase their self-esteem and personal safety against the opposite sex and, (c) improve the relationship with their father. During the intervention, questions were asked about their progress in general to monitor the patient's improvements, and assignments or activities to be developed for the sessions were assigned. Among the techniques used in the intervention are: (a) deconstruction, used for the positive aspects of therapy; (b) psycho-education, with which the consultant was

asked to understand the cycle of violence, the characteristics of the aggressors, the feelings and thoughts that victims of dating violence can present; (c) cognitive restructuring of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) was implemented to modify the way the consultant interpreted her experience in their relationship, the identification of automatic models and for the planning of new cognitive habits; (d) assertiveness training; (e) exceptions, were used to respond with self-control to violent situations that have not occurred; (f) imagery from the cognitive behavioral technique "take a leap forward" and (g) self-instruction in positive phrases when she felt negative emotions. The research showed an improvement in the psychological well-being of the client, generating positive changes in the cognitive, behavioral and interaction patterns. They concluded that the implementation of a brief program focused on cognitive-behavioral solutions is useful in the intervention in a woman victim of dating violence.

Peskin et al (2014), examined whether a program ("It's Your Game ... Keep It Real", IYG), reduced dating violence among 766 youth from ten high schools in Southeast Texas, which belonged to ethnic minorities and constituted a population at high risk of dating violence. The program sought the development of healthy relationships as a basis for good sexuality in adolescence. The design of the study was randomized controlled trial, with an experimental group (they received IYG), and control group (they received a health education program). The allocation of the schools for the control and experimental group was random, this technique was used to guarantee that the two groups were similar at the beginning of the study. The students of ten schools received financial incentives for their participation. The IYG program consisted of 24 sessions, and was based on the Cognitive Social Theory, Models of Social Influence, and the Theory of Triadic Influence. This program included classroom activities and a virtual environment, with exercises to train students in skills that allow them to face violent behavior in their relationship, in addition, they used videos with role plays among equals, questionnaires, animations and information about the characteristics of healthy and unhealthy couples for teenagers about the real world. The

activities developed in the classroom include six sessions to work between parents and children, seeking to increase communication about healthy relationships, using effective rejection skills, expectations of couples and parents' rules regarding dating relationships.

As a result of the study, they found that the control group was more likely to be a victim of physical and emotional violence in their relationship, compared to the students who received the intervention. However, among perpetration of dating violence, no significant differences were found between two groups. The researchers concluded that the effectiveness of the program should be studied more and therefore it should have a greater diffusion to be used in dating violence interventions among adolescents.

Meanwhile, Rey-Anaconda et al. (2014) designed and evaluated a program for unmarried couples who have experienced dating violence. The authors used a pretest-posttest design of a single group, with four heterosexual couples between 17 and 22 years old ($X = 20$ years, $SD = 1.89$ years), belonging to a public university in Colombia. Participants must have experienced dating violence or have perpetrated this type of behavior in their relationship, in addition, they should have the time to participate as a couple in the sessions. The intervention program was framed on Therapy and Behavior Modification Approach, which incorporated techniques for the improvement of communication skills, empathy and anger management. The program consisted of ten sessions, and two of them, were implemented per week with a duration of two hours per session, the general contents were: (a) session 1: Presentation of the program; (b) session 2: Beliefs and expectations about the couple's relationship; (c) session 3, session 4 and session 5: Communication skills; (d) session 6: Empathy; (e) session 7 and session 8: Anger management; (f) session 9: Management of jealousy and (g) session 10: Closing and evaluation of program effectiveness. The results of the study indicated a significant decrease in the use of violence behaviors by the participants, in addition, they decreased anger as a state and attitudes toward the use of violence in dating relationships, improving assertive communication. These

results indicated preliminarily that the program would have a positive effect in the awareness of the negative consequences of the use of violent behavior in the dynamics of dating relationships. The authors point out that improvements must be made in some aspects of the program to subsequently make the controlled clinical trial. Finally, they referred that some weaknesses of the study were the design used since there was no control group and the sample size.

Glass et al. (2015) evaluated a program (MyPlan) designed as an interactive application (App) accessible by a website or smart phone, which trained women victims of dating violence (aged 18 to 24 years old) in the United States about taking of safe decisions and to help their friends in case of victimization of dating violence, in order to diminish the physical and psychological damage that may occur long term and health consequences of victims. The application allowed users to receive information about: (a) healthy relationships; (b) safety priorities; and (c) level of violence severity/what constitutes a danger in the relationship. This information was used by the program to provide information and resources to plan personal safety strategies for victims.

The study used a randomized controlled trial protocol (experimental group and control group) and a follow-up at 12 months with 300 women university students who were victims of dating violence and 300 friends of university students who suffered this type of violence participated in this study. It was found that the program is a useful tool to provide information about violence in university students and that with this information they can plan safety strategies to improve their physical health. In addition, this intervention helped university students who received the program to attend effectively when a friend is a victim of violence by their partner, in making difficult security decisions.

Rothman et al. (2016) developed and evaluated the effectiveness of a brief motivational tertiary intervention (Real Talk) to reduce dating violence behaviors among adolescent perpetrators who attended at hospital center. The intervention was based on three psychological theories: (a) The Stages of Change Model; (b) The Theory of Planned Behavior; and (c) The Theory of Motivational Interviewing. In addition

to the above, the intervention was adapted according to the gender of the participant, because Feminist Theory suggests that the meaning, impact and consequences of intimate partner violence vary according to the sex of the perpetrator or the victim, therefore, the therapists were trained to modify and adapt the intervention if they perceived that the participants could be victims who blamed themselves or justified the use of violence. The program was administered to 36 participants (15 and 19 years old), in two groups: control (a brochure of dating violence) and another experimental group (the Real Talk program was administered to them), the results were evaluated at the end of the program, and a follow up was completed. The 86% of program participants reported that they felt better with the help received. The results show a reduction in the use of relational violence by the participants who received the intervention. In addition, participants in the experimental group compared to the control group were more likely to help their friends in situations of dating violence, alcohol drinking and decision making.

It could be concluded that the intervention proposal (Real Talk) showed effectiveness in the advance of the Stages of Change Model (from Precontemplation to Action stage) of the participants, and can be implemented in a context of medical attention, which can positively influence the decrease of attitudes in favor of the use of violence and violent behavior in dating relationships.

Rizzo et al. (2018) evaluated the efficacy of an intervention (Date SMART) to reduce dating violence and sexual behaviors among 109 adolescent girls with prior exposure to physical dating violence in the United States. The intervention consisted of six sessions to provide skills of self-assessment, cognitive restructuring, problem solving, emotion regulation strategies targeted to anger, jealousy and sadness, based on principles of cognitive behavioral therapy. Participants were randomly assigned to two conditions: (a) an intervention group, which received a toolkit of skills to handle situations involving dating violence and unprotected sex, and (b) a Knowledge-Only Group (KO), which received information about sexual health topics. Follow-up assessments were administered at four

time points (baseline, 3, 6, and 9 months), and participants received cash compensations for completing each assessment.

The results suggests that the intervention was effective reducing significantly all types of dating violence across the 9-month follow-up period compared to the (KO) group. Furthermore, the participants of the intervention showed improvements in condom use self-efficacy, HIV knowledge, depressive symptoms, and dysfunctional emotion regulation.

Draucker et al. (2019) evaluated an intervention that was delivered through the Web called WISER (Writing to Improve Self-in-Relations) with 14 college women between 18 and 25 years old, who had experienced problematic relationships with dating partners.

The intervention was a four-session online program, based on the Theory of Emerging Adulthood and Theory of Narrative Identity. The general contents were: modification of relational patterns characteristic of dating violence and the four practices of narrative therapy: externalization, oppressive social messages, unique results and preferred narratives, which were presented in four sessions with the help of videos of violent relationships in courtship and the writing of a story about their relationship.

The study was conducted with a single group pre-post to examine the feasibility and acceptability of the program. The findings suggest that the intervention demonstrated to be feasible and acceptable of delivery of content, decrease psychological and physical dating violence, and increase constructive communication, relationship satisfaction in men, and depression in women.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to conduct a systematic review of therapeutic interventions for victims and perpetrators of dating violence between 1997 and 2019.

Ten programs were identified, the first one, published in 2010. Seven of them were developed in the United States and in three of them in Ibero-American countries such as Colombia, Mexico and Puerto Rico (Guajardo et al., 2013; Rey-Anacona et al., 2014; Villafañe et

al., 2014). All the selected articles, presented the development and evaluation of the effectiveness of interventions for victims and perpetrators of dating violence.

Regarding the characteristics of interventions, most of them were directed towards the reduction of dating violence from the identification of healthy relationships and the development of techniques of: conflict resolution, empathy, anger management, decisions, assertiveness, communication skills, psychoeducation about dating violence and emotion regulation strategies. These activities were mainly carried out in classrooms and hospitals. In addition, the number of participants was between 1 and 397 and the number of sessions ranged from 1 to 20, either face-to-face and/or by computer, individually and in groups. Regarding the design of the studies, nine of ten programs were of a quantitative nature and one of a qualitative nature. Therefore, a great variability can be observed about the contents, the design, the number of sessions and the sample included in the interventions, which makes it difficult to make a comparison between the effects of the studies (Martínez et al., 2014; Mendelsohn et al., 2011). Also, four of ten studies included randomized controlled trials, so it is considered important to include experimental designs with follow-up of existing and future programs to ensure valid and objective results.

Relating to the population of the studies, most of the research was developed with adolescents and young people in school, so the results of these programs cannot be generalized to the entire population, therefore, it is important to design and evaluate the effectiveness of therapeutic interventions for victims and perpetrators specifically in out-of-school populations or in rural communities.

It should be mentioned that most of the programs included in the review considered the evaluation of behavioral change from different theoretical perspectives, mainly the cognitive behavioral model and the motivational interview. However, it is important to take into account the effect of such long-term changes in the revictimization of partner violence in adults. Similarly, therapeutic programs based on brief interventions in hospitals reduced the frequency

of victimization behaviors of dating violence, so Barak, Hen, Boniel-Nissim, & Shapira (2008) and Eckhardt et al. (2013) report that this type of therapeutic program can be beneficial in hospitals, however, it is essential to evaluate its effectiveness in the short and long term in other contexts.

About interactive interventions such as cell phone, internet and computer applications, in this review three interventions were found that made use of these tools (Cunningham et al., 2013; Drauker, et al., 2019; Glass et al., 2015). Cunningham et al. (2013) carried out their intervention from computer lessons and face-to-face therapeutic sessions. The findings of this program show that the use of computer lessons in addition to therapeutic activities can reduce the victimization of physical violence in adolescent dating. However, no significant effects were found in reducing the perpetration of sexual dating, therefore, the need to evaluate its effectiveness in greater depth in subsequent studies is evident. In the study of Glass et al. (2015), significant results were obtained regarding decision making in victims with a follow-up of 12 months through a cell phone application. Finally, Drauker et al. (2019) reported decrease psychological and physical dating violence among college students. Therefore, this type of interactive interventions can be attractive innovative solutions for the participants and improve their mental health (Bakker, Kazantzis, Rickwood & Rickard, 2016). However, Payne, Lister, West and Bernhardt (2015) point out in their systematic review that more scientific support and more rigorous methodological evaluations are required to determine the effectiveness of mobile applications and interactive interventions.

The findings of this study indicate that dating violence interventions are relatively recent and require more research, therefore, it is necessary to advance in the research of the design and evaluation of intervention programs individually and in groups for victims and perpetrators of violence in courtship in different regions of the world considering the high prevalence of this phenomenon in adolescents and young people (Beserra et al., 2016; Fernández-Fuertes & Fuertes, 2010; Martínez, Gutiérrez & Gómez, 2016).

The main limitation of this study was that the search was carried out only in eight databases and in four languages. The use of experimental designs for the evaluation of therapeutic programs in different contexts is recommended for future studies, and carry out follow-ups for the effects of these long-term programs. It is also necessary to conduct research that explores the possible and different effects of individual and group therapy on victims and perpetrators of dating violence in a face-to-face and interactive way.

- **Conflict of interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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