

# How to tackle gender violence among teens

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It's estimated that one in three women worldwide has experienced physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lifetime, mostly by an intimate partner. According to a survey by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 1 in 5 women in the 28 Member States has experienced physical and/or sexual violence from either a current or

previous partner. Moreover, a report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime revealed that over a third (30 000) of the women intentionally killed in 2017 were killed by their current or former intimate partner.

Such figures show that despite global efforts, [violence](#) against women continues. More research is needed to better explain its underlying factors. A study that was supported by the EU-funded FREE\_TEEN\_DESIRE project has analysed young female adolescents' perceptions of violent or non-violent profiles of boys and of sexual attraction.

## **Hooking up and stability in relationships**

The [findings of the study were published in the journal \*Palgrave Communications\*](#). The research was based on a survey of 100 girls aged 13 to 16 in different secondary schools in Spain, Cyprus, Finland and England. The researchers examined "their pattern of attraction for both 'hooking up' and stable relationships towards boys with either violent attitudes and behaviour or boys with non-violent behaviour." They stated: "Our findings suggest that in the different European secondary schools studied, a similar pattern of attraction is recognized by female participants: although non-violent boys are highly preferred to those with a violent profile, we observed that boys with violent attitudes and behaviours are mostly preferred for hooking up, and boys with non-violent traits are mostly preferred for stable relationships."

*The researchers emphasised that the dominant socialisation model of some adolescents into a type of relationship that links attractiveness to violence should be questioned in order to prevent and tackle gender violence.*

*"Violence prevention campaigns need to take the insights observed about hooking up and potential situations of dating violence into account in order to better challenge the imposed dominant socialization, meanwhile ensuring*

that girls and young [women](#) who are already victims of gender violence are not revictimized."

## *Quasi-experimental case study*

*The FREE\_TEEN\_DESIRE (Contributing to identify causes of gender violence among teenagers) project ran between 2015 and 2016. One of the main objectives was to "explore the extent to which dialogue situations (based on a language of desire) can question adolescent girls' [desires](#) that link attractiveness to violent behaviours," as stated on CORDIS. It was also aimed at assessing "whether this dialogic questioning of girls' desire, if any, is true beyond cultures," and at developing "the evidence-based approaches needed to increase effectiveness in the prevention of gender violence among adolescents."*

**More information:** FREE\_TEEN\_DESIRE project website:  
[www.ccsj.crim.cam.ac.uk/research/free-teen-desire](http://www.ccsj.crim.cam.ac.uk/research/free-teen-desire)

Lidia Puigvert et al. Girls' perceptions of boys with violent attitudes and behaviours, and of sexual attraction, *Palgrave Communications* (2019).  
[DOI: 10.1057/s41599-019-0262-5](https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-019-0262-5)

Provided by CORDIS

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