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Victimization and polyvictimization of Spanish children and youth: Results from a
community sample

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Abstract

Objective: Research conducted in adolescent victimization and polyvictimization has mainly been carried out in the United States and in northern European countries. The present study aims to determine the incidence of victimization and polyvictimization in a community sample of Spanish adolescents. **Method:** The sample consisted of 1,107 youth ($M = 14.52$, $SD = 1.76$), 590 males and 617 females, randomly recruited from seven secondary schools at a north-east region of Spain. The Spanish version of the Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire was applied, assessing six aggregate categories of childhood victimization (conventional crimes, caregiver victimization, peer and sibling, witnessed and indirect, sexual, electronic victimization). **Results:** A total of 83% adolescents reported at least one type of victimization during their lives, and 68.6% during the last year. Boys were generally more exposed to conventional crimes (68.0%), and girls to emotional abuse by caregivers (23.0%), and to sexual (13.9%) and electronic (17.6%) victimization during their lifetime. Age differences obtained in past year rates confirm that peer and sibling victimization peak in early adolescence (33.9%). Also, witnessing community violence is more frequent in older adolescents (34.7%). Adolescent polyvictims experienced victimization in four or more domains during their lifetime. **Conclusion:** The study added new information about the epidemiology of victimization to the international context, being the first to do so from the perspective of a country in south-west Europe. It illustrates that Spanish youth experience a high level of victimization, and that gender and age should be taking into account when analyzing this complex area of study.

Key-words: polyvictimization, Spain, adolescents, victimology

Introduction

The victimization of children and youth has been confirmed in studies around the world, affecting all countries (Finkelhor, 2008). However, the vast majority of studies have focused their interest on one type of victimization preventing, thus, the analysis of co-occurrence among different types of victimization that occurs in many of these cases (Herrenkohl & Herrenkohl, 2009). Fragmentation in the study of child victimization have make impossible to obtain complete profiles of victimization or to know the reality faced by many children not limited to a single form of violence. In this sense, *polyvictimization*, or the role of multiple victimization experiences in different episodes and their effect on a child's wellbeing (Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2007a), has been a neglected component in child victimization.

Only recently, research has begun to analyze the interrelationship between different kinds of victimization (Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Hamby, 2005a), but few studies outside the US, such as the ones in Canada (Romano, Bell, & Billette, 2011; Cyr et al., 2013), China (Chan, Brownridge, Yan, Fong, & Tiwari, 2011) or Malaysia (Nguyen, Dunne, & Le, 2009) have addressed these research questions specifically. In Europe, the studies that have provided some data about polyvictimization have mainly been conducted in northerly countries such as the United Kingdom (Radford, Corral, Bradley, & Fisher, 2013), Finland (Ellonen & Salmi, 2011) or Sweden (Gustafsson, Nilsson, & Svedin, 2009).

The epidemiology of polyvictimization in children and adolescents has shown to vary depending on the method to assess it, which underlies the need of studies using the same instrument to evaluate it. For example, community samples from North America have established a rate of lifetime polyvictimization ranging between the top 10% of the sample (as defined in Cyr et al., 2013; Finkelhor, Turner, Hamby, & Ormrod, 2011;

Turner, Finkelhor, & Ormrod, 2010, among others) to 32.5% of the sample (as classified Ford, Elhai, Connor, & Frueh, 2010). Studies conducted in northern European countries, have reported similar results. Radford et al. (2013) found that polyvictims aged 11 to 17 presented 13 or more types of victimization throughout their lives, while Ellonen and Salmi (2011) showed that 9% of a sample could be classified as polyvictimized, considering that have experienced at least five different interpersonal victimizations in different contexts during last year. On the other hand, Gustafson et al. (2009) have included also traumatic experiences not related to interpersonal violence, and obtained a mean of traumatic events in adolescents ranging from 2.7 to 4.0. In this sense, there is a need to confirm the epidemiology of child victimization and the extent of polyvictimization in different sociocultural contexts, such as countries from southern Europe, from a comprehensive perspective.

In Spain, studies published to date have focused preferably in surveys aimed at adult age groups over 16 years (Luque, 2006), even though adolescents are cognitively capable of reporting past events and understanding victimization questionnaires, not to mention the fact that they seldom report their victimization experiences to adults, thereby making them valuable informants in themselves. Although some studies asking children and adolescents directly have been conducted in Spain, as the *Encuesta de Convivencia Escolar y Seguridad de Catalunya. Curso 2005-2006* [Security and School Coexistence Survey in Catalonia. School year 2005-2006], they usually focus on a narrow spectrum of victimization experiences. Also, child victimization studies have been carried out, in most cases, with data from child social services (Sanmartín, 2002), although child welfare data and police statistics about child victimization in Spain are incomplete and do not offer a true picture of the extent of the problem. Therefore, the extent of victimization in Spanish children and adolescents based on their own reports is

still unknown. The importance of this information, obtained directly from children themselves, not from official records or professional reports, lies in the ignorance that often exists by government agencies regarding this type of cases (Finkelhor & Ormrod, 2001). On the other hand, to give children the opportunity to talk, often for the first time, about their victimization experiences is of great benefit for them (Save the Children, 2004). Some forms of child victimization (e.g., conventional crimes, sibling victimization, emotional abuse) have been routinely neglected in Spain, and while most studies have documented a high level of victimization in a single area (e.g., bullying Cerezo, 2009; Estévez, Murgui, & Musitu, 2008; Garaigordobil & Oñederra, 2008; cyberbullying: Buelga, Cava, & Musitu, 2010; dating violence: Fernández-Fuertes & Fuertes, 2010; González & Santana 2001; among others), there is no information about multiple victimization in Spanish youth, with just few exceptions. One of these studies is the one by Lila, Herrero & Gracia (2008) who have presented the victimization experiences of 1,908 adolescents in different contexts such as the street, school and home. The authors found that 58.4% of young people were victims in two of the three contexts, which can be considered a broad measure of polyvictimization.

Given the needs presented above, the present study aims to determine the incidence of victimization and polyvictimization in a community sample of Spanish adolescents across their lifespan and during a 1-year period. The small amount of research conducted in this area has mainly been carried out in the United States and in northern European countries, and hence there is a need for further studies in countries with different cultural backgrounds to disentangle the influences of the various cultural dimensions that may underlie the observed differences. Studying adolescents is important, due to the unique problems faced by this age group and the scant information regarding their victimization experiences (see, Rossman & Rosenberg, 1998). Also,

revealing the possible causes underlying cross-cultural variation in victimization rates may provide meaningful insights about the interaction between individual characteristics and culture. In this sense, expanding the perspective of developmental victimology to Spain will enable meaningful cross-cultural comparisons.

Method

Sample

Participants were randomly recruited from seven secondary schools at a north-east region of Spain. The schools were stratified by socioeconomic status (low-medium-high). To be included in the study, participants had to be between 12 and 17 years old ($M = 14.52$, $SD = 1.76$), and those who had cognitive and/or language difficulties that could undermine the validity of their responses to the assessment protocols were excluded. The total sample for this research was formed by 1,107 youth, 590 males and 617 females, whose main socio-demographic characteristics are shown in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 approximately here

Procedure

A cross-sectional observational multicenter study was conducted. The study was guided by the basic ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki in Seoul (World Medical Association, 2008) and by the Code of Ethics of the Catalan Psychological Association (COPC, 1989). It was also approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Barcelona (IRB00003099). In addition, the research comply with Article 131 of the Spanish Law 1/96 (15 January) on the legal protection of underage children, which establishes the obligation to report any cases of children at risk which might be detected during the study. In compliance with these guidelines, parents or guardians of each participant were informed, clarifying the general objectives of the research and their voluntary participation. They were asked to sign written informed

consent allowing the student to participate in the research, and adolescents gave their oral consent to participate. We ensured that refusal to participate did not imply any disadvantage for the student in question. Less than 3% of the final sample refused to participate. Instruments were applied in a class session by two researchers, educated on the basis of developmental victimology and trained in collecting data on violence against children (UNICEF, 2012).

Measures

Sociodemographic data sheet. An *ad hoc* self-report questionnaire including information about the social and family background of the child (age, sex, and educational level of the child, educational level and occupation of parents, family country of origin, and type of family) was included due to the significant results regarding victimization experiences related to these variables (Turner, Finkelhor, & Ormrod, 2007). Also, information about course repetition and previous psychological treatment was gathered.

Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire (JVQ; Finkelhor, Hamby, Ormrod, & Turner, 2005). A first version of the questionnaire, provided by its authors, was translated into Spanish and Catalan by the Research Group on Child and Adolescent Victimization (GReVIA) at the University of Barcelona. With the authors' permission the item referring to statutory rape was not included in the translated versions as the concept does not feature in Spanish law and it is not meaningful in relation to the social standards and values regarding consensual sexual relationships in Spain. Two new items were added in relation to electronic victimization in order to evaluate harassment of children and adolescents in the virtual context. The final draft therefore included 36 forms of victimization against children and youth, grouped into six modules or domains: conventional crime (9 items), caregiver victimization (4 items), victimization by peers

and siblings (6 items), sexual victimization (6 items), witnessing and indirect victimization (9 items), and electronic victimization (2 items) (Hamby & Finkelhor, 2001; Finkelhor, Ormrod, Turner, & Hamby, 2005b). The self-report version of the JVQ may be applied to subjects between 8 and 17 years old (Hamby & Finkelhor, 2001). Previous research has shown that the instrument has good reliability and validity (Finkelhor, Hamby et al., 2005).

Data analysis

Prevalence of various forms of lifetime and past year victimization was obtained. Polyvictimization was quantified by summing the total number of different types of victimization (out of 36) experienced by each participant (Finkelhor et al., 2005b) both during lifetime and past year period. In this sense, two polyvictimization measures were obtained, i.e. lifetime polyvictimization and past year polyvictimization. Additionally, polyvictims were identified as the 10% of youth who experienced the highest number of victimizations in each age group (Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2009; Finkelhor, Shattuck, Turner, Ormrod, & Hamby, 2011; Cyr et al., 2013), also in both periods of time (i.e., lifetime and past year).

When comparing gender (F vs M) and age groups (15-17 vs 12-14) the Odds Ratio (*OR*) was computed in order to quantify the association between these two variables (gender and age) and victimization rates. The *OR* measure was considered statistically significant when its 95% *CI* did not include the 1 value. The statistic Mann-Whitney U was applied to compare lifetime number of victimizations between age groups.

Results

Among 1107 participants, a total of 83% (85.1% of males and 80.7% of females, *OR* = 0.73 [0.53-1.00 95% *CI*]) reported at least one type of victimization during their

lives, and 68.6% (70.0% of males and 66.9% of females, $OR = 0.87$ [0.67-1.12 95% CI]) during the last year.

The prevalence of various forms of victimization during lifetime and past year is shown in Table 2, differentiated by JVQ modules, sub-modules and individual events.

Insert Table 2 approximately here

Conventional crime

Among the total sample, 61.5% reported some lifetime conventional crime victimization, with males and older adolescents being more likely the target of this victimization form than females ($OR = 0.56$) and younger children ($OR = 1.40$), respectively. Concretely, 49.4% reported lifetime *property victimization*, which includes robbery, theft, and vandalism, with boys being more victimized than girls, and older than younger children. The most common form of lifetime property victimization was theft, reported by 32.5% of the sample. The rate for *crimes against persons* (including assaults, kidnapping, bias attack and attempted or threatened assault) was 36.3% over the lifetime period, with the highest percentages for threatened (14.7%) and attempted assault (14.2%).

A similar pattern was observed for past year conventional crimes. The prevalence reported by youth was 45.8%, with higher rates for property victimization (33.4%) than for crimes against persons (24.3%) and the most common recent conventional crimes being also theft, threatened and attempted assault.

In general terms, boys had higher past year and lifetime victimization rates than girls ($OR = 0.72$; $OR = 0.56$) in the conventional crimes module, but with regard to age only lifetime differences were found, where 15-to-17 years-olds had higher levels of victimization than 12-to-14-years-olds ($OR = 1.40$).

Caregiver victimization

A quarter of the sample (25.3%) reported lifetime victimization by caregivers, while 18.1% reported past year experiences. This type of victimization was significantly more experienced by girls compared to boys ($OR = 1.42$ for lifetime and $OR = 1.83$ for past year experiences). The most common form of victimization was psychological/emotional abuse, with girls being more victimized than boys and older adolescents than younger ones in both lifetime and past year periods. Physical abuse by caregivers had a rate of 11.4% in lifetime and 6.7% in past year, no gender or age differences were found. Neglect and custodial interference had very low prevalence rates, even for the lifetime period (0.5% and 2.1%, respectively).

Peer and sibling victimization

Almost half of the children (48.8%) reported peer and sibling victimization during their lifetime while almost a third (30.6%) experienced this type of victimization in the past year. No statistically significant differences were observed between boys and girls, neither during their lifetime nor past year. However, differences between genders emerged when single items were analyzed for both lifetime and past year periods, i.e., boys were more likely than girls to be the target of non-sexual genital assault ($OR = 0.13$ and 0.11 , respectively) and gang/group assault ($OR = 0.36$ and 0.46 , respectively), while girls were more likely than boys to be victims of physical intimidation ($OR = 1.62$ and 1.96 , respectively) and relational aggression ($OR = 1.98$ and 2.27 , respectively).

With regard to peer and sibling victimization module, younger teenagers tended to be more victimized during the past year than adolescents aged between 15 and 17 years old, but this tendency disappeared when lifetime period was taken into account. Thus younger adolescents were more likely to be the target for non-sexual genital assault ($OR = 0.48$) and verbal/relational aggression ($OR = 0.46$) during past year, while older

adolescents were more prone to gang or group assault both during past year ($OR = 3.67$) and lifetime ($OR = 0.36$).

The most common forms of peer and sibling victimization experiences during lifetime and past year were peer or sibling assault, physical intimidation and verbal/relational aggression.

Sexual victimization

Sexual victimization was reported by 8.7% of the sample during lifetime and by 5.3% in the past year. This type of victimization was significantly more prevalent among girls than boys either in the past year ($OR = 4.33$) or during their lifetime ($OR = 3.82$). This pattern was also observed when sexual experiences were classified as being *with contact*, which includes sexual abuse/assault by a known or unknown adult, or by a peer, and forced sex, or *without contact*, which implies flashing and verbal sexual harassment. Girls were more likely than boys to be the target for sexual victimization both with contact ($OR = 3.07$ and 3.00 , respectively for lifetime and past year) and without contact ($OR = 4.01$ and 5.49 , respectively for lifetime and past year). Sexual victimization with physical contact reached a rate of 5% for girls, with slightly higher levels for unknown adults and peers perpetrators than for known adults, and of 10.1% when contact was not involved.

Witnessing violence and indirect victimization

Witnessing and indirect victimization was experienced by almost half of the sample (48.9%) during their lifetime and almost a third (32.1%) during the past year. Statistically significant age differences were found, with older teenagers being more victimized than younger ones. Exposure to *community violence* (e.g., witness assault, household burglary or witness murder) was approximately 7 to 10 times more prevalent

than exposure to *family violence* (e.g., witness to domestic violence or witness to parent assault to sibling) in both periods analyzed.

Gender differences were observed in the family violence exposure category, with females being more victimized than males ($OR = 2.21$ and 2.87 lifetime and past year, respectively), but were not encountered in the community violence sub-module.

Regarding age, lifetime rates for both family and community violence exposure aggregates were significantly higher for older adolescents compared to younger ones, but for recent events only differences for community violence remained.

Witnessing an assault without weapon was the most frequent type of victimization within the category of community violence (27.7% lifetime and 18.6% past year), and witnessing parent physical assault to a sibling (4.2% lifetime and 2.0% past year) within the family violence sub-module.

Electronic victimization

Electronic victimization was reported by 12.6% of children during their lifetime and 8.9% in the past year, with higher rates seen in girls for both past and more recent events. Lifetime electronic harassment (5.9%) was less common than unwanted sexual solicitations (8.4%) using electronic devices, especially for girls. Age differences were circumscribed to lifetime rates and to unwanted sexual solicitations, showing an increase in the older group.

Polyvictimization

Information regarding polyvictimization in Spanish adolescents is shown in Table 3. Firstly, in relation to past year experiences, 49.3% of the sample was classified in the *victim group* (1-3 victimization types), 15.2% in the *low polyvictimization group* (4-6 victimization types), and finally 4.1% formed the *high polyvictimization group* (7 or more victimization types), following the classification of Finkelhor and colleagues

(2005b). Thus, almost 20% of the sample was accordingly considered past year polyvictim.

Insert Table 3 approximately here

Secondly, lifetime polyvictims were identified as the top 10% victimized children, i.e., those who experienced the highest number of lifetime victimizations in each age group. This approach takes into consideration the increasing number of victimization types by age (Finkelhor et al., 2009). In the present study, having experienced at least 7 victimization types during lifetime implies that a child aged between 12 and 14 is considered a polyvictim, while this threshold increases to 9 in the cases of adolescents aged between 15 and 17 years old.

Finally, no age differences were encountered in past year prevalence rates (67.2% and 70.0% for 12-14 and 15-17 age groups, respectively), but regarding lifetime experiences older children tended to be significantly more victimized than younger ones (78.4% and 87.6%, respectively; $OR = 1.94$). Additionally, the mean number of lifetime victimizations among victims was slightly higher for older children (15-17) than for the 12-14 age group (see middle rows in Table 3), obtaining a statistically significant effect ($U = 124446$; $p < .05$). However, these age differences were not found in past year victimization. A constant mean of three victimization types was observed among those victimized; also, a constant 90th percentile corresponding to six victimization types was found among the total group.

Further analysis explored the number of JVQ modules of victimization experienced by polyvictims in comparison to other adolescents during their lifetime (see Table 4). Polyvictimization group was composed by the top 10% of teenagers with the highest lifetime victimization in each age group (see last rows in Table 3 for threshold values, i.e., 7+ for 12-14 group and 9+ for 15-17 group). Results showed that all

polyvictims experienced victimization in three or more modules. The majority of lifetime polyvictims aged 12-14 experienced victimization in four (42.6%) or five (31.5%) modules, while among the 15-17 years old lifetime polyvictims 71.4% were victimized in five or six modules (35.7% each).

Insert Table 4 approximately here

Discussion

The present study has shown the extent of youth victimization in a north-east region of Spain, doing so on the basis of self-reports, which in itself constitutes a methodological innovation in the Spanish context. Rather than analyzing the extension of one specific form of victimization in isolation, we have taken into account the potential accumulation of victimization experiences throughout childhood, this approach being consistent with other recent international studies (e.g., Finkelhor et al., 2005a) and some European research (Ellonen & Salmi, 2011).

Altogether, 69% and 83% of Spanish youth reported at least one victimization type during one-year and a lifetime period, respectively, with no differences between boys and girls. These results are in line with data from other European (UK: Radford et al., 2013, 57.1% and 83.7%, respectively; Finland: Ellonen & Salmi, 2011, 64.6% past year); and North-American studies (Canada: Cyr et al., 2013, 59-66% and 79-87%; Finkelhor et al., 2009, 69.3% and 79.6%). Our data provide evidence about high levels of exposure to violence in Spanish adolescents in a variety of domains, and reveals that serious forms of victimization (i.e.: witnessing a murder, exposure to shootings or riots, or forced sex or attempted rape) did happen to youths. It should be kept in mind that official statistics generally give lower rates because adolescents are not very eager to report their victimization experiences to police, and research shows that more than three-quarters did not do so (Vynckier, 2012).

Over the life course, at least half of the adolescents of this study have experienced some form of conventional crime, witnessing violence or peer victimization. Furthermore, one quarter of them reported some kind of victimization by caregivers, and one in eight some electronic victimization. Sexual victimization reached the lower prevalence rate with 14% for girls and 4% for boys, and was lower than those found in other studies with a similar age range (Cyr et al., 2013; Finkelhor et al., 2009; Radford et al., 2013), and also in studies from the same country conducted with college students (Pereda & Forns, 2007). Different factors can affect the disclosure of sexual victimization in childhood. The methodology used, obtaining data with a classroom survey, could have affected the results obtained but also cognitive and emotional developmental processes might be related making these children to realize about what have they suffered later in life (London, Bruck, Ceci, & Shuman, 2005).

Developmental victimology is interested in both age and gender patterns to draw the real map of victimization in children and youth (Finkelhor, 2008). In this regard, the present study shows that boys are generally more directly exposed to conventional crimes, and girls to emotional abuse by caregivers, and to sexual and electronic victimization. These patterns have been already found in previous research (Finkelhor et al., 2009; Cyr et al., 2013; Jones, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2012), and evidence the experience of more physical assaults and property crimes among boys and more emotional, subtle or indirect forms of victimization among girls plus the sexual domain. The differences in the events experienced by both sexes are in line with the results obtained from college students in Spain (Martin & de Paul, 2005) and other countries (Frazier et al., 2009), and present important clinical implications that should be taken into account when conducting primary prevention programs for young people.

Age differences obtained in past year rates confirm that peer and sibling victimization probably declines in late adolescence, except for gang assaults (e.g., Eslea & Rees, 2001; Pellegrini & Long, 2002). Also, results showed that witnessing community violence is more frequent in older adolescents, probably related with a higher autonomy and independency in the behavior of the adolescent that could be explained by the classic lifestyle exposure theory (Hindelang, Gottfredson, & Garofalo, 1978). But contrary to previous studies there were no higher rates in older adolescents for sexual and caregiver victimization (Cyr et al., 2013; Finkelhor et al., 2009). These differences could be related to differences in methodology (telephone interview *vs* classroom surveys) but also to cultural differences, related to family and sex issues. More studies are needed to confirm these trends. Additionally, results clearly support that cut-off points for lifetime polyvictimization have to be adjusted by age even among 12 to 17 year olds, since, as stated elsewhere (Finkelhor et al., 2009), older adolescents have suffered more victimization experiences than younger ones. However, past year cut-off points could be the same for all the age range assessed in this study.

Polyvictimization, as stated before, has been described as multiple victimization experiences in different episodes; but, in addition, a cross-contextual accumulation nature has been proved. Adolescent polyvictims experienced victimization in four or more domains, according to our results and Cyr's et al. (2013) study. So, these children have fewer chances to have satisfactory relationships in developmentally important contexts of their lives which can have very deleterious effects in the construction of their self-esteem and interpersonal trust. The consequences for polyvictims are serious, calling for early recognition and intervention. More research is required in order to identify polyvictimized children and analyze the individual, familial and social factors that lead a child to become a polyvictim (Finkelhor et al., 2005b). Radford et al. (2013)

found in their study that polyvictimization had less impact on trauma symptoms for young children. Therefore, further studies are necessary to explore the differences in polyvictimization between different age groups, sexes, and also between polyvictims with different victimization profiles.

In sum, the strengths of the current study are, firstly, the new information it has added about the epidemiology of victimization and polyvictimization to the international context, being the first to do so from the perspective of a country in south-west Europe and allowing comparison with other countries using a similar methodology. Secondly, the study illustrates that youth from a south-western European cultural context experience a high level of victimization, and that gender and age should be taken into account because of the variations associated to them in victimization rates among all the countries.

However, the current study has a variety of limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the representativeness of the sample has some shortcomings, since the study only sampled those children going regularly to school and low socioeconomic families were not fully represented, even though a large range of socioeconomic levels were included. Second, although the sample size is large, especially for studies conducted in Spain, it does not allow to study developmental trends or to estimate low prevalence victimization types which can be very important to have a full picture of victimization in adolescence. And third, the research only relied upon self-reports and a collective administration of measures. Collective data collection is subjected to more errors because it is not possible to assure full comprehension of the questions or it can be easier to skip or deny questions that are harmful or difficult to answer for the individual. Measures were taken to minimize these risks but this possible limitation should be taken into account when analysing the results obtained.

Conclusions

Some practical implications can be derived from the results obtained. Spanish children suffer different victimization experiences related to different domains or contexts. This fact makes these children vulnerable to psychological maladjustment and other serious negative experiences such as revictimization along the lifespan (Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2007b; Gustafson et al., 2009). Professionals should be aware of these results to early identify these children, and offer them interventions that address a variety of violence experiences and that are not only focused in one of them.

Since victimization experiences accumulate over the life course, especially conventional crimes and exposure to community violence, prevention programs should be addressed to young children to cut the negative effects of these experiences. Also, peer victimization starts very early and prevention should target young children before the problem arises. On the other hand, sexual and caregiver victimization programs should target young children but also older adolescents, since the latest seem to be still at a similar risk level.

Also, an important topic for further consideration concerns how the concept of polyvictim and polyvictimization should be operationalized. Probably, the cut-off point should be different depending if the main objective is research or is diagnosis with clinical purposes. Cut-off points could be defined using diverse methodologies, the top 10% percentile is the more restrictive criteria and probably captures the most severe cases, but more research is needed in order to assure that we are not missing important polyvictimization cases.

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Table 1. Sample characteristics.

Variable	Male		Female		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Age						
12-14	283	48.0	268	51.8	551	49.8
15-17	307	52.0	249	48.2	556	50.2
Family composition						
Two parents ^a	510	86.4	432	83.6	942	85.1
Single parent	62	10.5	68	13.2	130	11.7
Other ^b	14	2.4	15	2.9	29	2.6
Don't know/refuse	4	0.7	2	0.4	6	0.5
Country of origin ^c						
Spain	568	96.3	481	93.0	1049	94.8
Other	22	3.7	35	6.8	57	5.1
Don't know/refuse	0	0.0	1	0.2	1	0.1
Parent's education ^d						
No education or unfinished primary school	2	0.3	0	0.0	2	0.2
Primary or secondary school	32	5.4	35	6.8	67	6.0
High school	65	11.0	60	11.6	125	11.3
Above high school	429	72.7	370	71.6	799	72.2
Don't know/refuse	62	10.5	52	10.1	114	10.3

^a Includes living with two biological parents and living with one biological parent and a step parent.

^b Other includes shared custody, a grand-parent, adult sibling, other family members, friends and foster family.

^c Country of origin of the child.

^d Parent with the highest education level.

<i>Victimization</i>	<i>Lifetime victimization</i>									<i>Past year victimization</i>						
	Victimized		Gender (%)			Age (%)			Victimized		Gender (%)			Age (%)		
	n	%	M	F	OR	12-14	15-17	OR	n	%	M	F	OR	12-14	15-17	OR
C. Conventional crimes	681	61.5	68.0	54.2	0.56 *	57.5	65.5	1.40 *	507	45.8	49.7	41.4	0.72 *	46.6	45.0	0.93
Property victimization	547	49.4	53.1	45.3	0.73 *	45.7	53.1	1.34 *	370	33.4	33.7	33.1	0.97	34.5	32.4	0.91
C1. Robbery	161	14.5	19.5	8.9	0.40 *	9.4	19.6	2.34 *	95	8.6	11.2	5.6	0.47 *	6.9	10.3	1.54 *
C2. Personal theft	360	32.5	32.7	32.3	0.98	28.9	36.2	1.40 *	242	21.9	20.7	23.2	1.16	22.0	21.8	0.99
C3. Vandalism	181	16.4	15.6	17.2	1.27	20.5	12.2	0.54 *	115	10.4	9.3	11.6	1.28	13.2	7.6	0.53 *
Crimes against persons	402	36.3	45.4	25.9	0.42 *	33.6	39.0	1.27	269	24.3	29.5	18.4	0.54 *	24.7	23.9	0.96
C4. Assault with weapon	65	5.9	9.0	2.3	0.24 *	3.6	8.1	2.34 *	40	3.6	5.4	1.5	0.27 *	2.5	4.7	1.88
C5. Assault without weapon	132	11.9	16.6	6.6	0.35 *	10.5	13.3	1.30	85	7.7	10.2	4.8	0.45 *	7.3	8.1	1.12
C6. Attempted assault	157	14.2	20.0	7.5	0.33 *	10.5	17.8	1.84 *	101	9.1	12.4	5.4	0.41 *	8.2	10.1	1.26
C7. Threatened assault	163	14.7	15.8	13.5	0.84	15.1	14.4	0.95	102	9.2	9.2	9.3	1.02	10.3	8.1	0.76
C8. Kidnapping	14	1.3	1.5	1.0	0.63	0.7	1.8	-	6	0.5	0.7	0.4	-	0.5	0.5	-
C9. Bias attack	32	2.9	2.7	3.1	1.15	3.3	2.5	0.76	19	1.7	1.5	1.9	1.27	2.2	1.3	0.57
M. Caregiver victimization	280	25.3	22.2	28.8	1.42 *	23.6	27.0	1.20	200	18.1	13.9	22.8	1.83 *	16.7	19.4	1.20
M1. Physical abuse	126	11.4	11.0	11.8	1.08	10.7	12.1	1.14	74	6.7	5.6	7.9	1.45	7.1	6.3	0.88
M2. Psychological/emotional abuse	191	17.3	12.2	23.0	2.15 *	14.0	20.5	1.59 *	150	13.6	8.8	19.0	2.42 *	10.9	16.2	1.58 *
M3. Neglect	6	0.5	0.3	0.8	-	0.4	0.7	-	4	0.4	0.2	0.6	-	0.4	0.4	-
M4. Custodial interference/family abduction	23	2.1	1.5	2.7	1.80	1.6	2.5	1.56	10	0.9	0.3	1.5	-	0.7	1.1	-
P. Peer and sibling victimization	540	48.8	49.2	48.4	0.97	46.6	50.9	1.19	339	30.6	30.3	30.9	1.03	33.9	27.3	0.73 *
P1. Gang or group assault	98	8.9	12.4	4.8	0.36 *	4.0	13.7	3.81 *	54	4.9	6.4	3.1	0.46 *	2.2	7.6	3.67 *
P2. Peer or sibling assault	231	20.9	20.8	20.9	1.00	20.9	20.9	1.00	150	13.6	12.5	14.7	1.20	15.1	12.1	0.77
P3. Nonsexual genital assault	94	8.5	14.1	2.1	0.13 *	9.3	7.7	0.82	54	4.9	8.3	1.0	0.11 *	6.5	3.2	0.48 *
P4. Physical intimidation	147	13.3	10.7	16.2	1.62 *	13.4	13.1	0.97	97	8.8	6.3	11.6	1.96 *	10.0	7.6	0.74
P5. Verbal/relational aggression	235	21.2	15.9	27.3	1.98 *	19.6	22.8	1.21	97	8.8	5.8	12.2	2.27 *	11.8	5.8	0.46 *
P6. Dating violence	20	1.8	2.0	1.5	0.76	0.9	2.7	-	14	1.3	1.5	1.0	0.63	0.7	1.8	-
S. Sexual victimization	96	8.7	4.1	13.9	3.82 *	6.7	10.6	1.65 *	59	5.3	2.2	8.9	4.33 *	5.1	5.6	1.10
With physical contact	36	3.3	1.7	5.0	3.07 *	2.7	3.8	1.40	25	2.3	1.2	3.5	3.00 *	2.2	2.3	1.07
S1. Sexual abuse/assault by known adult	5	0.5	0.2	0.8	-	0.4	0.5	-	3	0.3	0.2	0.4	-	0.4	0.2	-
S2. Sexual abuse/assault by unknown adult	11	1.0	0.3	1.7	-	0.7	1.3	-	10	0.9	0.3	1.5	-	0.7	1.1	-
S3. Sexual abuse/assault by	12	1.1	0.7	1.5	-	1.1	1.1	0.99	9	0.8	0.5	1.2	-	0.9	0.7	-

peer/sibling																
S4. Forced sex (including attempts)	10	0.9	0.5	1.4	-	0.5	1.3	-	5	0.5	0.2	0.8	-	0.4	0.5	-
Without physical contact	68	6.1	2.7	10.1	4.01 *	4.9	7.4	1.54	39	3.5	1.2	6.2	5.49 *	3.6	3.4	0.94
S5. Flashing/Sexual exposure	39	3.5	0.7	6.8	-	2.7	4.3	1.61	24	2.2	0.7	3.9	-	1.8	2.5	1.40
S6. Verbal sexual harassment	34	3.1	2.0	4.3	2.14 *	2.7	3.4	1.26	18	1.6	0.5	2.9	-	2.0	1.3	0.63
W. Witnessing and indirect victimization	541	48.9	49.3	48.4	0.96	39.7	57.9	2.09 *	355	32.1	32.2	31.9	0.99	28.1	36.0	1.43 *
Family violence	71	6.4	4.2	8.9	2.21 *	4.7	8.1	1.78 *	31	2.8	1.5	4.3	2.87 *	2.4	3.2	1.38
W1. Witness to domestic violence	32	2.9	2.0	3.9	1.94	1.6	4.1	2.60 *	11	1.0	0.7	1.4	-	0.7	1.3	-
W2. Witness to parent assault to sibling	46	4.2	2.4	6.2	2.71 *	3.3	5.0	1.57	22	2.0	0.8	3.3	-	1.6	2.3	1.44
Community violence	513	46.3	47.3	45.3	0.92	37.2	55.4	2.10 *	341	30.8	31.5	30.0	0.93	26.9	34.7	1.45 *
W3. Witness to assault with weapon	183	16.5	17.6	15.3	0.84	12.9	20.1	1.70 *	123	11.1	10.8	11.4	1.06	9.6	12.6	1.35
W4. Witness to assault without weapon	306	27.7	29.8	25.1	0.79	19.1	36.2	2.40 *	206	18.6	19.3	17.8	0.90	14.5	22.7	1.72 *
W5. Burglary of family household	139	12.6	10.0	15.5	1.65 *	11.4	13.7	1.23	56	5.1	4.2	6.0	1.77	4.7	5.4	1.15
W6. Murder of family member or friend	29	2.6	1.7	3.7	2.21 *	2.4	2.9	1.23	8	0.7	0.2	1.4	-	0.7	0.7	-
W7. Witness to murder	18	1.6	2.0	1.2	0.57	1.5	1.8	1.24	6	0.5	0.5	0.6	-	0.4	0.7	-
W8. Exposure to random shootings, terrorism or riots	67	6.1	7.6	4.3	0.54 *	4.2	7.9	1.97 *	50	4.5	5.6	3.3	0.57	3.1	5.9	1.98 *
W9. Exposure to war or ethnic conflict	7	0.6	0.7	0.6	-	0.4	0.9	-	1	0.1	0.0	0.2	-	0.0	0.2	-
INT. Electronic victimization	139	12.6	8.1	17.6	2.41 *	9.4	15.6	1.78 *	98	8.9	6.6	11.4	1.82 *	8.0	9.7	1.24
INT1. Harassment	65	5.9	3.6	8.5	2.52 *	4.9	6.8	1.42	40	3.6	2.5	4.8	1.95 *	3.4	3.8	1.10
INT2. Unwanted sexual solicitations	93	8.4	5.1	12.2	2.59 *	5.8	11.0	2.00 *	70	6.3	4.4	8.5	2.02 *	5.8	6.8	1.19

^a When prevalence was lower than 1%, *OR* was not computed

Table 2. Lifetime and past year victimization

Table 3. Victimization types and score thresholds according to age group.

	Lifetime (%)			Past year (%)		
	12-14 (n = 551)	15-17 (n = 556)	Total (n = 1107)	12-14 (n = 551)	15-17 (n = 556)	Total (n = 1107)
No victimization	21.6	12.4	17.0	32.8	30.0	31.4
1-3 victimizations	n/a	n/a	n/a	49.2	49.5	49.3
4-6 victimizations	n/a	n/a	n/a	13.4	16.9	15.2
7 victimizations and over	n/a	n/a	n/a	4.5	3.6	4.1
Number of victims	432	487	919	370	389	759
Mean number of victimizations among victims (SD)	3.48 (2.48)	4.17 (2.89)	3.85 (2.73)	2.82 (2.14)	2.90 (2.21)	2.86 (2.19)
Child above mean	31.8	32.2	37.8	28.1	32.0	30.1
Number of victimization in the top 10 th percentile	7+	9+	8+	6+	6+	6+
Child above top 10 th percentile	9.8	7.6	7.9	6.5	7.4	7.0

n/a: not applicable. Categories are based on Finkelhor et al. (2005b) criterion for past year victimization.

Table 4. Number of modules of victimization according to lifetime polyvictimization status and age group.

Number of modules ^a	12-14 year old		15-17 years old	
	Polyvictims (%)	Others (%)	Polyvictims (%)	Others (%)
No victimization	-	23.9	-	13.4
One module	0.0	28.2	0.0	21.8
Two modules	0.0	22.1	0.0	27.0
Three modules	18.5	18.9	0.0	25.1
Four modules	42.6	6.2	28.6	9.9
Five modules	31.5	0.6	35.7	2.5
Six modules	7.4	0.0	35.7	0.2

^a Modules included are those from JVQ: Conventional crimes, victimization by caregivers, peer and sibling victimization, sexual victimization, witnessing and indirect victimization, and Internet victimization