



# Electronic Sexual Coercion and Sexual Violence Among Adolescent Girls in San Diego County

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## INTRODUCTION

-In the US, rates of sexual violence are highest among adolescent and young adult females.

-Electronic communication technology may be a relatively new venue in which females experience sexual coercion and violence.

-Sexual violence via electronic communication is particularly concerning among adolescent girls, as an estimated 88% of adolescents own or have access to a cell phone, 92% of whom go online daily.

-Adolescent females experience sexual violence from both partners and non-partners, across multiple venues, yet little is known regarding whether experiencing violence via electronic communication is associated with experiencing violence in-person.

**The Current Study:** The goal of the present study is to determine the association between electronic sexual coercion (ESC) and in-person sexual violence, perpetrated by both partners and non-partners.



## METHODS

### Participants and Procedure:

-Participants (n=159) were adolescent females recruited from a health clinic in National City, CA.

-Eligibility criteria included the following: a) female, b) between the ages of 15-19, and c) report being sexually active in the past 6 months.

-Participants completed a 60-minute survey via tablet with a variety of questions including relationship status, experiences with violence, and electronic sexual harassment and coercion (ESC).

-Participants received a \$20 gift card for participation in the qualitative interviews. All study procedures were approved by the UCSD Human Research Protections Program.

## Measures:

**Electronic Sexual Coercion (ESC):** Four items were used to measure participants experiences with ESC. Has a boy/man ever: a) pressured you to send sexual photos/videos, b) shared sexual photos without permission, c) sent unwanted sexual photos/messages, and/or d) pressured you online or via text to do something sexual in-person. Participants were also asked to identify their relationship with the perpetrators for each of the 4 dichotomous ESC items. Three variables were created: a) experiencing any ESC, b) experiencing partner ESC, and c) experiencing non-partner ESC.

**Sexual Violence:** Seven items were used to measure various aspects of partner and non-partner sexual violence. Participants were asked if a male had ever: a) pressured you to have sex when you didn't feel ready, b) insisted on having sex when you didn't want to, c) used threats to make you have sex, d) used force to make you have sex with them, e) used force to make you have sex with someone else, or f) made you do something sexual when you didn't want to.

**Demographics:** Variables such as age, race, and relationship status were used to characterize the sample.

**Analysis:** Descriptive statistics were used to summarize girls' characteristics. Logistic regression models were used to assess the association between ESC and a) partner sexual violence and b) non-partner sexual violence. Demographic variables significantly associated with sexual violence were included in adjusted models.

## RESULTS

The majority of participants (77%) identified as Hispanic/Latina, 65% were currently in a relationship, and 68% had ever experienced ESC.

Variable	Total % (n)	Partner Sexual Violence % (n)	Non-Partner Sexual Violence % (n)
	100 (159)	13.2 (21)	9.6 (15)
Age M(SD)	17.2(1.1)	12.0(3)	19.9(4)
Hispanic/Latina: Yes	76.7(122)	56.0(14)*	66.6(14)
Hispanic/Latina: No	23.3(37)	44.0(11)*	33.3(7)
<b>Relationship Status</b>			
Single	17.6(28)	12.0(3)	23.8(5)
In a relationship	65.4(104)	68.0(17)	52.4(11)
Hooking up/friends with benefits	14.5(23)	20.0(5)	19.0(4)

Variable	Partner Sexual Violence AOR(CI)	Non-Partner Sexual Violence AOR(CI)
ESC	6.1(1.4-27.4)*	10.8(1.4-83.3)*
No ESC	Ref	Ref
Partner ESC	6.7(2.4-18.8)*	18.7(5.3-65.3)*
No Partner ESC	Ref	Ref
Non-Partner ESC	0.6(0.2-2.2)	0.4(0.1-1.6)
No Non-partner ESC	Ref	Ref

\*= Significant at p<.05 Adjusted for Race (Hispanic/Latina)



## CONCLUSION

-Within the context of romantic relationships, sexual violence occurs in multiple venues, including in person and online.

-Adolescent females who experience partner ESC may also be at greater risk for experiencing other forms of sexual violence by non-partners.

-Future longitudinal studies are needed to determine the temporality of the association between ESC and in-person sexual violence.

-ESC should be considered under the larger umbrella of sexual violence research and prevention efforts.

## Acknowledgements

-This research was supported by a grant through NICHD #R21HD073610-01A1, PI: Reed -M. Salazar was supported by a T32 Predoctoral Fellowship Award on Substance Abuse, HIV, and Related Infections from the National Institute of Drug Abuse T32 DA023356, PI: Stefanie Strathdee