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Validation of the Dating Violence Questionnaire, DVQ (*Cuestionario de Violencia entre Novios*, CUVINO) among Spanish-speaking youth: Analysis of results in Spain, Mexico and Argentina

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ABSTRACT

Violence that appears in couple relationships has become a topic of great importance during the past few years, as preventive interventions have multiplied. The suitability of these initiatives is closely related to the assessment tools used to detect the population's needs; however, little emphasis has been placed on developing specific questionnaires for adolescents and youth, especially in Spanish. This study was based on a sample of 5,170 people from Spain, Mexico and Argentina who answered the *Cuestionario de Violencia de Novios, CUVINO (Dating Violence Questionnaire*, DVQ), a Spanish language tool which assesses victimization and was developed for youth. The factor analysis yielded eight types of abuse (*Emotional Punishment, Coercion, Detachment, Physical, Gender-Based, Humiliation, Instrumental* and *Sexual*), with an explained variance of 51.3% and alpha values ranging between 0.58 and 0.81 for reliability. There were differences in the frequency of victimization in Spain and Latin America, while the abuse pattern was similar in both samples. The importance of the DVQ for guiding prevention programs in the future is also discussed.

Keywords: dating violence, couple violence, maltreatment, factor analysis. *Received: June 1, 2010 Accepted: September 9, 2010*

INTRODUCTION

Couple violence has constituted a very interesting object of study over the past decade. The increase in the number of publications dealing with such terms as domestic violence and/or intimate partner violence has been significant (Rodríguez-Franco, López-Cepero and Rodríguez-Díaz, 2009), though it is true that the number of studies concerning couples of younger ages has been smaller (López-Cepero, Rodríguez-Franco, Rodríguez-Díaz and Bringas, 2010). The focus of the investigative effort is consistent with other developments of State agencies and departments, like the appearance of specialized victim assistance centers (such as the toll-free telephone number 016), the implementation of a new legal protection system (Organic Act 1/2004), and many other measures.

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The developments mentioned above reveal the importance of primary prevention, which is an attempt to ensure that the problem does not appear. In this regard, the assessment takes on enormous importance, since we can only intervene systematically in what we detect. However, professionals frequently experience difficulty in choosing solid assessment instruments to guide the subsequent preventive work (Recio, Cuadrado and Ramos, 2007). Assessing the prevalence of violence within a couple is a tough task that is done with several methods (with regard to the sampling, the time span of the assessment, the types of maltreatment considered, the environment where the study is conducted, etc.). These differences clearly influence the results, thus making it impossible to talk about *maltreatment* in singular, since there are a number of approaches and proposals (or concepts of abuses) implicit in literature (Heise and García-Moreno, 2002). On a classification level, it is possible to find maltreatment categories referring to physical aggression (hitting, kicking, beating...); psychological abuses (intimidation, contempt, humiliation...); forced sexual relations or acts; controlling behavior (isolation, control of activities, restrictions on access to information and assistance); and a long list of etceteras. However, these categories may be subdivided

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into more concrete ones or may not be included in certain evaluation instruments, making it difficult to compare the results.

In her 2005 work, Langhinrichsen-Rohling pointed out the appearance of the Conflict Tactics Scale (Straus, 1979) as one of the main landmarks in the development of couple violence. According to this author, this contribution was the first common instrument to assess aggression occurring during interpersonal cohabitation on a quantitative basis. Later, a great number of instruments were developed and validated with similar objectives. In a recent work (López-Cepero, Rodríguez-Franco, and Rodríguez-Díaz, under preparation), as many as 42 validated evaluation instruments were identified, and several conclusions of interest for this study were drawn. The first of these conclusions refers to the high variability of the number of subscales (1 to 17) taken into account in these tools; this characteristic makes it impossible to explain or organize data obtained on the basis of only one empirical corpus, in spite of the fact that abuses are assessed in all cases. On the other hand, although the most frequent classification in the literature is that which divides maltreatment into physical abuse, psychological abuse, and sexual abuse (for example, Rodríguez-Carballeira, Almendros, Escartín, Porrúa et al., 2005; Rodríguez-Franco et al., 2009), the revision revealed that the results from factor analyses rarely matched this triad. There are many reasons for this: first, factors provide a structure for the items included in the assessment instrument, and thus the initial selection of items limits the aspects that can be detected. Another reason that results do not match is because in certain solutions, some items are not assigned to the factor that would correspond from the theoretical point of view. Finally, we detected studies in which different details of some of these three maltreatment categories are distributed among several categories.

In the revision, we thus determined that there are a wide variety of conceptualizations which are closely related with their assessment methods. As a result, it is necessary to analyze in detail the concept of maltreatment (or abuses) which each instrument entails in order to choose an option that reflects our objectives and population. When addressing the issue of how to create prevention programs for Spanish-speaking youth, we divided the analysis into three questions: which instruments have had the greatest impact on research and offer the most assurance of validity and reliability; which instruments have been validated in the Spanish-speaking population, and which have been designed (or at least validated) for the young.

There are many validated instruments, but two are worthy of note due to the number of validation studies published on them and because they are wellestablished. In terms of these validated instruments, Straus's CTS (1979) has been the most popular - so popular, in fact, that the author himself admitted that his improved version, the CTS-2, could not replace its predecessor (Straus, 2008). The CTS offers information on only two forms of aggression, physical and verbal abuse, while the CTS-2 included two new subscales: sexual coercion and the seriousness of the injuries (Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy y Sugarman, 1996). On the other hand, the Index of Spouse Abuse (ISA), by Hudson and McIntosh (1981), the other strong basis for a considerable number of subsequent questionnaires, contains two subscales (physical and non-physical), which are very

similar to the categories of the original CTS.

The second question raised refers to the validation of the instrument in the Spanish language. Nine of the sixty-one validation articles consulted in the abovementioned revision used Spanish-speaking samples obtained in their country of origin (three in Mexico, six in Spain). Tests that met this condition (only the validation studies in Spanish are cited) were: CTS (Muñoz-Rivas, Andreu, Graña, O'Leary et al., 2007), CTS-2 (Calvete, Corral and Estévez, 2007; Mora, Natera, Tiburcio and Juárez, 2008), ISA (Plazaola-Castaño, Ruíz-Pérez, Escribà-Agüir, Jiménez-Martín et al., 2009), Maltrato a la Mujer por Parte de su Pareja (Maltreatment of Women by their Male Partners) (APCM) (Matud, Carballeira and Marreiro, 2001), Inventario de Abuso Psicológico en Relaciones de Pareja (Inventory of Psychological Abuse in Couple Relationships) (IAPRP) (Calvete, Corral and Estévez, 2005), Conflicts in Adolescent Dating Relationship Inventory (CADRI) (Fernández-Fuertes, Fuertes and Pulido, 2006), Index to Measure Violence Against Women -IMVAW - (Castro, García, Ruiz and Peek-Asa, 2006), and Encuesta de Violencia/Índice de Severidad en Violencia de Pareja (Violence Survey/Index of Severity in Couple Violence) -EV/ISPV- (Valdez-Santiago, Híjar-Medina, Salgado de Snyder, Rivera-Rivera et al., 2006). Thus, the CTS-2 was the only instrument validated for Spain and Mexico.

Lastly, the third question refers to which instruments contain data on young and adolescent couples. A considerable percentage of the studies consulted assessed young people at some point during the validation process, though they were not focused on getting to know the reality of this population group; university students were used because this type of sample is easily accessible to most researchers. Regarding the instruments already described, there are studies conducted with university samples for CTS and CTS-2, and specific validations for adolescent samples in only one questionnaire, the CADRI (Fernández et al., 2006; Wolfe, Scott, Reitzel-Jaffe, Wekerle et al., 2001).

Based on the results obtained from the revision, it is hard to decide which is the best tool to use with the Spanish-speaking population. CTS and CTS-2 appear as two commonly used instruments. The CTS-2 has an added advantage: it was validated for both the Spanish and Mexican samples, which makes it preferable to CTS. However, none of the instruments was specifically designed for the young, and validations done with this age range seem to be due to the fact that university students are more accessible (as opposed to researchers' interest in getting information on people's first experiences in a couple). Therefore, the clearest candidate of those explored seems to be the CADRI: this instrument offers six subscales that cover (and improve) the physical, psychological and sexual criteria and it is designed for adolescents and the young. However, the validation performed in Spain provides data on the acts of aggression committed, not on the victimization experience - despite the fact that the original version by Wolfe et al. (2001) offers both data. Therefore, the choice depends on whether the intention is to focus on the aggressor role or on the victim role in prevention. Ultimately, we should consider that it is a translated instrument (i.e. not developed in Spanish), and that it was not validated with a sample taken directly from Mexico, but from people who migrated to the United States.

Over the last few years, the research team has developed the Dating Violence Questionnaire, DVQ (Cuestionario de Violencia de Novios, CUVINO), which was created in Spanish and is specifically aimed at assessing violence suffered within couple relationships. Although it can be used for couples of any age, it was designed on the basis of information provided by adolescents and youth of both sexes, and has been revised through pilot experiments carried out among the young population (courses, workshops, activities, etc.). However, there is only one validation study available (Rodríguez-Franco, Antuña, Rodríguez-Díaz, Herrero et al., 2007). Thus, the purpose of the article is to offer data about the structure and reliability of the CUVINO to assess interpersonal relations of young dating couples from Spain, Mexico and Argentina. Based on that, the new possibilities that the CUVINO offers are discussed with relation to the design of new prevention initiatives among Spanish-speaking youth, since this instrument provides the maltreatment pattern that can be used to come up with a new proposal of couple violence assessment. We expect that this will be useful to prevent and deal with abusive emotional interpersonal relations within this reality.

METHOD

Participants

The study covered a total of 5,170 individuals of both sexes who had received formal schooling and who were recruited at different study centers of Spain, Mexico, and Argentina. In total, 2,034 (39.3%) were students who had not yet entered the university (professional training or modules, secondary school or prep school, depending on the country of origin), while 3,140 (60.7%) were attending college at the time they answered the CUVINO. People were surveyed in the classroom. The mean age of the total sample was 19.03 years (SD = 2.46 years), with a minimum of 15 and a maximum of 26. Distribution by sex and age for each country is shown on Table 1.

| | Spain (N=2934) | Mexico (N=1767) | Argentina (N=473) | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Women | 2017 (68.7%) | 1057 (59.8%) | 358 (75.7%) | | | | | |
| Men | 917 (31.3%) | 710 (40.2%) | 115 (24%) | | | | | |
| Mean | 18.69 | 18.83 | 21.89 | | | | | |
| Age | (SD=2.29) | (SD=2.26) | (SD=2.34) | | | | | |
| Table 1: Sex and age of participants, according to their | | | | | | | | |
| country of origin | | | | | | | | |

These individuals participated voluntarily; the only condition was being in a couple relationship for at least one month before the assessment, no gathering data

Instrument

from people who did not.

The study used the Dating Violence Questionnaire (CUVINO) (Rodríguez-Franco et al., 2007), an assessment tool that includes behaviors which constitute violence in adolescent couple relationships.

It consists of 42 behavioral indicators that should be answered on a 5-point Likert scale (between 0 and 4); additionally, two groups of questions were included. In the first place, the individuals who answered ves to the question Have you felt maltreated? also informed when the relationship started, its duration, attempts to end the relationship, the level of contact with the aggressor, his/her knowledge about dating violence in other couples, etc. Likewise, each of the questionnaire items required information on the degree of distress suffered by the victim as a result of such behaviors if they had in fact occurred, or a guess as to how such behaviors would upset the victim if they did occur. This second type of response was structured into a Likert scale on intensity. These additional data have not been presented in this study, as their analysis would require a separate article.

Procedure

The analysis of the data was carried out with the statistical package SPSS 15.0 for Windows. The procedure consisted of several successive steps. In the first place, the factorial structure of the questionnaire was determined by conducting a factor analysis of the main components, with varimax rotation. The following criteria were used for the extraction and assignment of factors: self values equal to one or higher, factorial saturation on .35 or higher, and variance explained by a factor of 4% or above. In those cases in which an item was assigned to more than one factor, the reliability of all factors was analyzed to find out which of the possibilities offered more psychometric guarantees; thus each item was ultimately assigned to the factor in which it offered the best reliability conditions. Factors were labeled by the authors, who took into account both the contents of the different behavioral indicators that form each factor and the paper published by Rodríguez-Franco et al. (2007). Later, a correlational analysis was performed among the direct scores of the factors that make up the factorial structure of the questionnaire. Finally, an analysis of the variance (ANOVA) was conducted to find out the mean levels per factor for the Latin American and Spanish subsamples.

RESULTS

The rotated solution offered 8 factors, consisting of 3-7 items each, and converged in 8 iterations. The explained variance percentage was 51.30%, with values ranging between 4.3% and 8.5% for each factor. Table 2 contains a description of the results, including the label chosen, the number of items included in each factor, the explained variance percentage in each of them, and the Cronbach's index of reliability of each of them. The structure found was similar to that proposed by Rodríguez-Franco et al. (2007), except that in item 20 (*Has he/she thrown blunt instruments at you*), which in the first study saturated the *Instrumental Violence* factor, was assigned this time to the *Physical Violence* factor. Table 3 shows the weight assigned to each of the items.

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| Factor | Label | No. of items | Items included | Variance ex- plained | Alpha |
|--------|----------------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| 1 | Detachment | 7 | 6,14,22,30,32,33,37 | 8.55% | 0.796 |
| 2 | Humiliation | 7 | 7,15,23,31,36,40,41 | 7.56% | 0.818 |
| 3 | Sexual | 6 | 2,10,18,26,34,39 | 7.35% | 0.770 |
| 4 | Coercion | 6 | 1,9,17,25,38,42 | 6.28% | 0.739 |
| 5 | Physical | 5 | 5,13,20,21,29 | 6.28% | 0.700 |
| 6 | Gender- Based | 5 | 3,11,19,27,35 | 5.73% | 0.743 |
| 7 | Emotional Punishment | 3 | 8,16,24 | 4.67% | 0.681 |
| 8 | Instrumental | 3 | 4,12,28 | 4.33% | 0.588 |
| | Total | 42 | | 51,30% | 0.932 |

Table 2. Name, items, explained variance, and Cronbach's Alpha for each factor

| Component | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|--|--|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | |
| .628 | | | | | | | | |
| .622 | | | | | | | | |
| .621 | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| .618 | | | | | | | | |
| .577 | | | | | | | | |
| .558 | | | | | | | | |
| .433 | | | | | | | | |
| | .667 | | | | | | | |
| | .600 | | | | | | | |
| | .579 | | | | | | | |
| | .527 | | | | | | | |
| | .495 | | | | | | | |
| | .465 | | | | | | | |
| | .458 | | | | | | | |
| | | .749 | | | | | | |
| | | .655 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | .641 | | | | | | |
| | | .638 | | | | | | |
| | | .618 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | .444 | | | | | | |
| | | | .612 | | | | | |
| | | | .611 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | .577 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | .576 | | | | | |
| | | | .575 | | | | | |
| | | | .361 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| _ | | | | .704 | | | | |
| | | | | .678 | | | | |
| | | | | .646 | | | | |
| | | | | .587 | | | | |
| | | | | .378 | | | | |
| | | | | | .681 | | | |
| | | | | | .667 | | | |
| | | | | | .598 | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | .576 | | | |
| | | | | | .374 | | | |
| | | | | | | .578 | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | .543 | | |
| | | | | | | .497 | | |
| | | | | | | | .768 | |
| | | | | | | | .682 | |
| | | | | | | | .509 | |
| | .628 .622 .621 .618 .577 .558 | .628 .622 .621 .618 .577 .558 .433 .667 .600 .579 .527 .495 | .628 .622 .621 .618 .577 .558 .433 .667 .600 .579 .527 .495 .465 .458 .458 .749 .655 .641 .638 .618 | 1 2 3 4 .628 .621 .621 .621 .618 .577 .558 .433 .667 .600 .579 .527 .433 .667 .600 .579 .527 .495 .465 .458 .749 .655 .641 .638 .618 .618 .612 .611 .577 .576 .576 .575 | $\begin{array}{c ccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccccc$ | $\begin{array}{ c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c c$ | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 .628 .622 .621 .621 .618 .577 .558 .433 .667 .600 .579 .527 .495 .465 .458 .655 .641 .655 .641 .655 .641 .638 .618 .618 .618 .611 .577 .576 .576 .575 .361 .646 .587 .378 .681 .667 .598 .576 .576 .578 .578 .578 .578 .578 .578 .578 .578 .578 .578 .578 .543 | |

Table 3. Factor solution rotated by means of Varimax method, with saturation values above 0.35

Table 4 shows the values obtained from the correlational analysis among the eight factors, in

which it is observed that in all cases the relationship is statistical significant, for a value of p<.01.

| | DETACHMENT | HUMILIATION | SEXUAL | COERCION | PHYSICAL | GENDER-BASED | EMOTIONAL PUNISHMENT | INSTRUMENTAL |
|----------------------|------------|-------------|--------|----------|----------|--------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| DETACHMENT | 1 | .654** | .506** | .566** | .404** | .536** | .604** | .305** |
| HUMILIATION | .654** | 1 | .508** | .555** | .523** | .634** | .581** | .367** |
| SEXUAL | .506** | .508** | 1 | .477** | .430** | .469** | .441** | .399** |
| COERCION | .566** | .555** | .477** | 1 | .443** | .480** | .515** | .327** |
| PHYSICAL | .404** | .523** | .430** | .443** | 1 | .399** | .410** | .480** |
| GENDER-BASED | .536** | .634** | .469** | .480** | .399** | 1 | .465** | .315** |
| EMOTIONAL PUNISHMENT | .604** | .581** | .441** | .515** | .410** | .465** | 1 | .317** |
| INSTRUMENTAL | .305** | .367** | .399** | .327** | .480** | .315** | .317** | 1 |
| | | | | | | | | |

Table 4. Correlations among CUVINO factors (**p<0.01)

The variance was subsequently analyzed, in a comparison of the mean scores obtained for each factor in the subsamples from Spain (N=2934), and Latin America (N=2240). Except for the factors *Humiliation* and *Emotional Punishment*, the Spanish and Latin American populations yielded different results for all the test factors, with a probability level of p < .01. Table 5 shows the descriptive data of this analysis, in addition to a column containing the weighted means, which were obtained by dividing the direct mean by the number of items that make up each factor. Chart 1, in turn, represents the weighted mean values for each of the subsamples, and for the total sample, in each of the eight factors.

| | | N | Mean | Weighted mean | Standard Deviation | Confi Interva | 5% idence l for the ean | F | р |
|------------------|---------------|------|------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|--------|-------|
| | | | | | | Lower Limit | Upper Limit | | |
| | SPAIN | 2856 | 3.21 | 0.46 | 3.74 | 3.07 | 3.34 | | |
| DETACH- MENT | LATIN AMERICA | 2240 | 3.95 | 0.56 | 4.25 | 3.77 | 4.12 | 43.91 | 0.000 |
| DE | Total | 5096 | 3.53 | 0.50 | 3.99 | 3.42 | 3.64 | | |
| | SPAIN | 2871 | 1.76 | 0.25 | 2.76 | 1.66 | 1.86 | | |
| -VI N | LATIN AMERICA | 2240 | 1.88 | 0.27 | 3.12 | 1.75 | 2.01 | 2.233 | 0.135 |
| HUMILIA- TION | Total | 5111 | 1.81 | 0.26 | 2.93 | 1.73 | 1.89 | | |
| Ļ | SPAIN | 2863 | 1.16 | 0.19 | 2.53 | 1.07 | 1.25 | | |
| SEXU- AL | LATIN AMERICA | 2240 | 1.48 | 0.25 | 2.6 | 1.37 | 1.59 | 19.04 | 0.000 |
| S | Total | 5103 | 1.3 | 0.22 | 2.57 | 1.23 | 1.37 | | |
| | SPAIN | 2877 | 2.37 | 0.40 | 3.04 | 2.25 | 2.48 | | |
| COER- CION | LATIN AMERICA | 2240 | 2.94 | 0.49 | 3.28 | 2.81 | 3.08 | 42.407 | 0.000 |
| 00 | Total | 5117 | 2.62 | 0.44 | 3.16 | 2.53 | 2.71 | | |
| | SPAIN | 2872 | 0.5 | 0.10 | 1.37 | 0.45 | 0.55 | | |
| PHYSI- CAL | LATIN AMERICA | 2240 | 0.61 | 0.12 | 1.46 | 0.55 | 0.67 | 7.72 | 0.005 |
| 4 | Total | 5112 | 0.55 | 0.11 | 1.41 | 0.51 | 0.59 | | |

Table 5. Análisis de varianza para submuestras española y latinoamericana

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| | | N | Mean | Weighted mean | Standard Deviation | Confi | % dence l for the can Upper Limit | F | р |
|------------------------------|---------------|------|------|------------------|-----------------------|-------|--|-------|-------|
| | SPAIN | 2869 | 1.44 | 0.29 | 2.19 | 1.36 | 1.52 | | |
| GENDER- BASED | LATIN AMERICA | 2240 | 1.7 | 0.34 | 2.26 | 1.6 | 1.79 | 16.69 | 0.000 |
| BB | Total | 5109 | 1.55 | 0.31 | 2.22 | 1.49 | 1.61 | | |
| T | SPAIN | 2882 | 1.04 | 0.35 | 1.65 | 0.98 | 1.1 | | |
| EMOTIONAL PUNISH- MENT | LATIN AMERICA | 2240 | 1.11 | 0.37 | 1.8 | 1.04 | 1.19 | 2.35 | 0.125 |
| | Total | 5122 | 1.07 | 0.36 | 1.72 | 1.02 | 1.12 | | |
| | SPAIN | 2883 | 0.15 | 0.05 | 0.74 | 0.13 | 0.18 | 12.15 | |
| INSTRUMEN- TAL | LATIN AMERICA | 2240 | 0.23 | 0.08 | 0.83 | 0.19 | 0.26 | | |
| | Total | 5123 | 0.19 | 0.06 | 0.78 | 0.16 | 0.21 | | 0.000 |

Table 5 (cont.). Análisis de varianza para submuestras española y latinoamericana

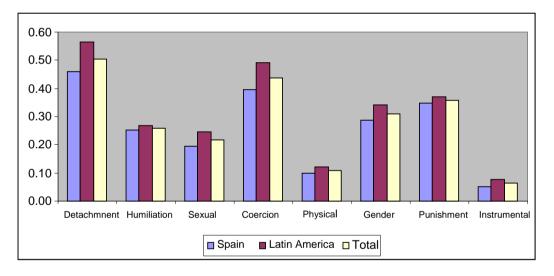


Figure 1. Weighted means per factor for subsamples and total sample

DISCUSSIÓN

The first outstanding result is the complex structure of our object of study, commonly termed as *gender violence* (in Spain), *domestic violence, inti-mate partner violence,* etc. Unlike what is usually proposed from a legal viewpoint, which makes reference to physical and psychological types, we found many more factors after analyzing the data obtained from a broad sample of more than 5,000 subjects from different Spanish-speaking countries.

From this perspective, and according to our data, the term *psychological* may be relevant in the field of behavioral sciences, but in this case, it is excessively generic and offers little in terms of ex-

planations. Likewise, based on our data, only one of the factors found could resemble the physical type proposed from the legal viewpoint, which would require us to assign the remaining seven factors to *psychological violence*. Although the distinction of *sexual violence* as a separate type has gained some acceptance, and is supported by some instruments such as the CTS-2, we can say that the results obtained in this research do not comfortably fit with any of the proposals known and validated to date.

One fact worth mentioning is that the *gender violence* factor identified in the CUVINO forms part of a much wider systems of violent relationships. Given that both women and men distinguish this from other forms of aggression, we should think about the usefulness of intervention focused exclusively on the prevention of sexist relationships. Such interventions disregard other factors present in the data obtained through the CUVINO. In this regard, the data lead us to conclude that the importance of maintaining the *gender* label should be reconsidered. *Gender* is used in an inappropriate way in Spain to refer to all acts of aggression that occur within a couple. However, the term can be more confusing than clarifying, when it comes to carrying out preventive work with youth.

There is one previous CUVINO validation study (Rodríguez-Franco et al., 2007), in which 8 factors practically identical to those we identified were defined from a sample of 709 Spanish women who had received formal schooling. This study gathers data from more than 5,000 individuals of both sexes from three different countries and who have different educational levels. The fact that the factor structure is so similar, in spite of the use of the exploratory methodology (instead of confirmatory factor analyses), suggests the validity of the structure described. The correlation among subscales seems to indicate that as many as eight maltreatment subtypes have been isolated, all with a common feature that could be related to a higher-order factor, i.e. abuses within the couple. Likewise, the total reliability of the scale (Cronbach's alpha of 0.932) and of the subscales (alpha values between 0.58 and 0.81, with 6 factors above 0.70) indicates that there are sufficient psychometric qualities to consider the CUVINO a valid and reliable assessment tool.

The reliability of the results is also confirmed by comparing the Spanish and Latin American samples. Although the mean frequency was higher in six of the eight factors for the South American sample (México and Argentina), the maltreatment profile was practically identical in both subsamples, with weighted means higher in the factors Detachment and Coercion, Gender-Based and Emotional Punishment (in that order); the lowest values were reported for Physical and Instrumental. These data make us think that there is a common pattern in the abuse among adolescent and young couples, and although frequency can vary by country, the questionnaire structure provides multicultural support. The determination of the role that sexism, tolerance, and other cultural variables may play in these differences should be a future topic of research.

Having described the virtues of the CU-VINO, we consider it useful to resume the debate introduced in the first part of this paper. We use validity and reliability to assurance the assessment, but what is this assessment for? There are data available on the young population from different Spanishspeaking countries who had received formal schooling and on how often 42 relationship abuse indicators occur. We consider that the accumulation of such data helps create a solid empirical basis for the design of prevention initiatives. Such initiatives would, in the authors' view, take advantage of a maltreatment classification that surpasses the one traditionally proposed (physical, psychological, and sexual). The purpose of this study was not, however, to develop a diagnostic instrument that classifies the assessed individuals as maltreated or not maltreated. We believe that any behavior considered in the CUVINO can indicate a risk, and before defining a cut-off point which separates normal from abnormal, we consider

it critical to keep these harmful models of interpersonal relationships from taking hold, since the risks to human health of said models are well-documented in the literature (Matud, 2004).

In this regard, if we look to the future, it may be valuable to combine the levels of frequency and distress of the proposed indicators. This would give us measurement tools specific to certain groups (according to gender, educational level, country of origin, etc.) and thus allow us to identify the biggest areas of protection and risk of a specific group of subjects. If this were achieved, we could provide specific groups with a preventive intervention fit to their needs, one that offers them useful conceptual tools to ensure that they will not stand for any acts that no young person should endure in a relationship. Ultimately, learning to assess one's own relationship is necessary to keep abuses from occurring. An old proverb can be useful in this regard: seek and ye shall find.

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