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A campus LGBTQ community's sexual violence and stalking experiences: the contribution of pro-abuse peer support

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Previous studies of peer support for various types of violence against college students are heteronormative, being primarily concerned with the abuse of heterosexual women by heterosexual males. Using recent data from the Campus Quality of Life Survey conducted at a large residential college in the South Atlantic part of the US, the main objective of this paper is to help fill a major research gap by presenting data on two ways in which negative peer support contribute to sexual violence and stalking in a campus LGBTQ community. The results show that LGBTQ students are more likely to receive such support than heterosexual ones and that negative peer support predicts sexual assault and stalking among both types of students. Implications for further empirical and theoretical work are discussed, as well as some key policy issues.

key words sexual assault • stalking • LGBTQ • peer support • college

key messages

- LGBTQ students report higher rates of sexual assault and stalking than heterosexual students.
- LGBTQ students are more likely to receive negative peer support than are their heterosexual counterparts.

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Introduction

There is, and rightfully so, major concern about sexual assault on the college campus. Still, the bulk of the discussions among researchers, practitioners, activists and policy makers focus on the plight of heterosexual women (DeKeseredy et al, 2017a; Guadalupe-Diaz, 2015). What Mullins (2013, p. 1) stated four years ago still holds true today: ‘Amid a growing debate over sexual violence on campus, one community has mostly been absent from the conversation: lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students.’ This is highly problematic because a growing number of studies show that members of campus LGBTQ communities are at equal or greater risk of being sexually assaulted compared with heterosexual students. For example, Ford and Soto-Marquez’s (2016) campus survey found that the rate of sexual assault experienced by gay men (24 per cent) is nearly equal to that (24.7 per cent) reported by heterosexual women in their sample. They also uncovered that bisexual college women experience sexual assault at a rate (37.8 per cent) markedly higher than the often quoted ‘one in four’ figure.

Using data generated by the Campus Quality of Life Survey (CQLS) administered at a large residential college in the US, the main objective of this study is to add to the small, but rapidly growing body of empirical work on violence against student members of campus LGBTQ communities. More specifically, we move beyond the heteronormativity of most previous campus peer support studies to examine the relationship between *negative peer support* and two types of violence against LGBTQ students: sexual assault and stalking. Though there are various definitions of this determinant, here, we offer a modified version of DeKeseredy’s (1988a) conceptualisation of *male peer support*: attachments to peers and the resources they provide that perpetuate and legitimate various types of violence against college students.

Theoretical issues

As far as we know, none of the theoretical work on intimate violence against LGBTQ people has focused on negative peer dynamics. It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a detailed explanation for the absence of such work, but our rationale for hypothesizing that peer support is a correlate of LGBTQ victimisation is as follows and is informed by the male peer support theoretical literature. *Male peer support theory* suggests that when some men seek the advice of their peers, they are given both encouragement and advice on how to abuse women who ‘talk back’ or do not provide sex on demand. Data accumulated over the past 30 years show that having friends who offer such advice is one of the most powerful determinants of whether a male engages in physical, sexual, or psychological assaults on intimate female partners (DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 2013; 2015).

Male peer support is strongly associated with separation/divorce violence against women (DeKeseredy et al, 2017b). For example, many members of patriarchal peer groups view beatings, sexual assault, and other forms of victimisation as legitimate and effective means of responding to ‘damaged’ patriarchal masculinity and reaffirming a man’s right to control his female partner (Messerschmidt, 1993; Ray, 2011). Not only do these men verbally and publicly state that sexual assault and other types of abuse are legitimate means of patriarchal authority and domination, they also serve

as role models because many of them physically, sexually and psychologically harm their own intimate partners (DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 2013).

Peer support motivates men to 'lash out against the women...they no longer can control' (Bourgois, 1995, p. 214). Consider women who leave male partners for a lesbian woman. A growing literature shows that the coming-out experiences of lesbians sometimes entails violent assaults committed by ex-boyfriends and ex-husbands, as well as sexual harassment and stalking. Bisexual women, too, are at risk of experiencing these harms, despite revealing their sexual orientation at the start of a heterosexual relationship (Meyer, 2015). In fact, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) found that bisexual women are more likely to experience rape, physical violence and stalking from an intimate partner compared to heterosexual women and lesbians. Moreover, bisexual women reported that most perpetrators (89.5 per cent) were males (Walters et al, 2013). Other studies of violence against bisexual women have uncovered even higher rates of only male perpetration (Messinger, 2017; Walters and Lippy, 2016).

Men who associate with patriarchal male peers and with those who abuse women are also patriarchal and typically have hostile attitudes toward bisexuality. They are, as Meyer (2015, p. 128) puts it, 'troubled by its rejection of dichotomous sexual orientation.' Hence, if a patriarchal man's peers see him as a failure with women because his lesbian partner wants to leave him or if his partner is bisexual, he is likely to be ridiculed because he 'can't control his woman' (DeKeseredy et al, 2004). Like many college men who rape women, he is likely to sexually assault her to regain status among his peers. The sexual assaults committed against lesbian or bisexual women during or after the termination of a relationship may have much more to do with male perpetrators' need to sustain their status among their peers than either a need to satisfy their sexual desires or a longing to regain a loving relationship (DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 2013; Godenzi et al, 2001).

Of course, there is no way of directly testing this speculative theory using the CQLS. Even so, findings revealing a relationship between negative peer support, sexual violence, and stalking in a campus LGBTQ community could lead to the crafting of another study specifically designed to do so. We do know, however, that there is peer support for anti-LGBT discrimination and violence (Levin and Nolan, 2017; Meyer, 2015). Thus, an unknown number of victims included in our sample may have belonged to heterosexual peer groups due to a fear of having their gender or sexual identities revealed, but were victimised if they 'came out' or if their true identities were uncovered.

In sum, this study responds to DeKeseredy and Schwartz's (2013) call for new empirical work on peer support for violence. Certainly, the data presented in a subsequent section of this paper tell us much, but there are still many unanswered questions to consider and new avenues to explore. Chief among them is the development of a self-report survey that focuses on the motivations of offenders.

Methods

Sample and data collection

Conducted in spring 2016, the CQLS is a web survey of 30,470 students who are 18 years of age or older at a large residential college in a South Atlantic part of the US.

A total of 5,718 participants completed the questionnaire, which is close to 20 per cent of the entire student population, and the response rate is comparable to that of the larger Association of American Universities (AAU) Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct (Cantor et al, 2015). As noted in Table 1, the CQLS self-selected sample is, for the most part, representative of the entire campus population. Nevertheless, there are sex discrepancies in Table 1. Survey response and non-response studies show that trends in who answers surveys do, in fact, exist, with women typically being more likely to participate than men (DeKeseredy et al, 2017b; Smith, 2008). Furthermore, the relevance of the survey also influences response rates (Groves et al, 2000). Therefore, since women are among the highest risk of groups to experience the harms addressed in this study, it is not surprising that the CQLS elicited a higher percentage of females than that of the college's general population, as well as a lower percentage of men than that of the broader male student community.

Table 2 presents data on the numbers and percentages of students' sexual orientations and gender identities. Ninety-two per cent ($n = 4,966$) of the sample reported that they are heterosexual/straight and 8 per cent ($n = 427$) reported belonging to the other groups listed in Table 2. Given the relatively small number of people who belong to each LGBTQ group, for purposes of data analysis, it was necessary to combine all of

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the main campus population and the CQLS sample

Status	Population $N = 30,470$	Sample $N = 5,718$
Undergraduate	77.3	78.9
Professional	4.6	5.1
Graduate	18.2	15.9
Sex		
Female	48.6	57.2
Male	51.4	37.1
Other	Not recorded	1.1
Race/Ethnicity		
Black/African American	6.7	4.4
White	86.5	83.8
Asian	6.4	6.0
Hawaiian /Pacific Islander	0.5	0.2
Native American	1.4	0.4
Hispanic*	3.8	3.1
Other (including mixed race)	Not recorded	2.0
Age		
Average age	23.3	22.1

Note: *The ethnic category 'Hispanic' was considered separate from race in the population column and so the total exceeds 100%.

Table 2: CQLS respondents' sexual orientations and gender identities*

Sexual orientations/gender identities	N	%
Gay	92	2.00
Lesbian	55	1.00
Bisexual	194	4.00
Asexual	38	1.00
Heterosexual/Straight	4,966	92.10
Transwoman	7	0.12
Transman	3	0.10
Genderqueer/gender-non-conforming	23	0.40
A sexual orientation not listed here	48	1.00
A gender not listed here	27	0.50

Note: *The categories presented in this table come from two questions, one about *gender* and one about *sexual orientation*. Therefore, the percentages included in the table will add to more than 100%.

them into one category, which we label the LGBTQ community. Thus, an obvious limitation of this study is that we are unable to determine whether certain groups of LGBTQ people have higher or lower rates of sexual violence and stalking. Still, we can identify male and female members of the LGBTQ community and women were 14 per cent more likely to report being LGBTQ than males in the sample. The sample was recruited using a campus-wide publicity strategy that involved:

- electronic advertisements on the college's various news sites;
- posters about the study were placed throughout the campus;
- many faculty members encouraged students to participate in the study;
- affiliates of various campus resource centres publicly encouraged students to complete the survey;
- interns affiliated with one of the college's social scientific research centre announced the survey in all their classes; and
- the college's president sent out a campus-wide electronic message to all students requesting them to participate in the survey.

Incentives, too, were used to recruit participants. Every type of publicity involved telling students about the opportunity to be randomly selected to receive one of 20 \$50.00 VISA gift cards. This was also stated in the survey itself. The literature on internet surveys shows that lotteries are widely used in web surveys and are often more effective than other types of incentives (Couper and Bosnjak, 2010).

Email invitations to complete the survey were sent to 30,470 students, with the first of four weekly invitations sent out on 28 March 2016. Each invitation included a link to the survey, which was administered using Qualtrics software. After clicking the link to the survey in the email invitation and then clicking a button to participate, respondents were taken to a screen containing a consent form. Students who indicated that they did not want to participate were removed from the email reminder list.

Participants were asked to confirm that they were at least 18 years old and a current student. They were additionally told that any information they provide will be kept

completely anonymous. What is more, it was made explicit that student anonymity is a priority and that any information they share cannot be identified. Moreover, they were informed that the research team cannot access their IP address or link the survey to their names, student IDs or email addresses. Furthermore, under the research protocol, students were told that participation in this study is strictly voluntary and that they can skip any question and stop at any time.

Regardless of what they chose, all participants were provided with information on free professional support from counselling services. Every page of the survey that contained sensitive questions had a link to on-campus resources, including one at the close of the instrument. Located below the list of resources at the end of the survey was the option for students to enter their email addresses in a draw for a \$50.00 VISA gift card. To further preserve students' anonymity, spreadsheets containing participants' responses are securely stored by Qualtrics and are only accessed by the research team.

After the first email invitation, three reminders were sent out (one a week) for a total of four weeks of data collection. Couper and Bosnjak (2010, p. 539) assert that 'much of the nonresponse occurs at the early stages before we have a chance to convince them of the importance of the study.' The opposite occurred with the CQLS. In fact, close to 2,500 students completed the survey within five days of the first email invitation. Again, supplementing the reminders were those provided by colleagues affiliated with other faculty departments and offices at the college.

Measures

Sexual assault

The five items in Table 3 are modified versions of a few included in Koss et al's (2007) Revised Sexual Experiences Survey (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.80$). They were introduced with the preamble below and the response categories are 'yes' and 'no.' Note that above the third item in Table 3 was the statement: 'If you are a male, go to the next item', followed by

The following questions concern unwanted sexual experiences that you may have had since you enrolled at XXX. We know that these are personal questions, so we don't want your name or other identifying information. Your answers are completely confidential. We hope this helps you feel comfortable answering each question honestly.

Following the above question, students were asked a question that includes six slightly modified versions of items included in the University of Kentucky's Campus Attitudes Toward Safety (CATS) Survey (Center for Research on Violence Against Women, 2014). The responses to this question are provided in Table 4: 'Who was the person with whom you experienced unwanted sex? Select all that apply.'

Stalking

Stalking is defined here as 'the willful, repeated, and malicious following, harassing, or threatening of another person' (Melton, 2007, p. 4). It was operationalised using the eight items in Table 5 that are derived from the CDC's National Intimate Partner and

Table 3: LGBTQ and heterosexual sexual assault victimization

	LGBTQ respondents				Heterosexual respondents			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
Type of sexual assault	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Someone fondled, kissed, or rubbed up against the private areas of my body or removed my clothes without my consent – but did not attempt sexual penetration.	132	33.3	264	66.7	917	20.5	3,562	79.5
Someone had oral sex with me or made me have oral sex with them without my consent.	46	11.6	350	88.4	230	5.0	4,249	95.0
Someone put their penis, fingers, or other objects into my vagina without my consent.	41	15.4	226	84.6	264	9.7	2,462	90.3
Someone put their penis, fingers, or other objects into my butt without my consent.	38	9.6	357	90.4	162	3.6	4,309	96.4
Even though it didn't happen, someone <i>tried</i> to have oral, anal, or vaginal sex with me without my consent.	82	20.9	311	79.1	479	10.7	3,998	89.3

Table 4: Sexual assault perpetrators

Relationship	LGBTQ		Heterosexual	
	N	%	N	%
Student you were dating or spouse/partner	13	8.2	87	8.1
Student who was 'friend with benefits' or I was 'hooking up' with	33	20.9	193	18.0%
Student	72	45.6	474	44.2
College employee	4	2.5	23	2.1
Person with no connection to college	48	30.4	229	21.3
Other	9	5.7	84	7.8

SexualViolence Survey (NISVS) (Black et al, 2011) (Cronbach's alpha = 0.77). They were introduced with this question: 'How many times have one or more people done the following things to you since you enrolled at XXX?' Then, survey participants were asked about their relationship to a perpetrator. The response categories are presented in Table 6 and the relationship question was introduced as follows:

Think about the situations that have happened to you that involved the experiences you marked on the last screen. Now think about the *one situation* that had the greatest effect on you and answer the following questions.

Peers' pro-abuse informational support

This variable refers to peers' guidance and advice that influences people to sexually, physically and psychologically abuse their dating partners (DeKeseredy and Schwartz, 1998). To measure it, we created an index by adding male and female respondents' scores on seven slightly modified items developed by DeKeseredy (1988b) and presented in Table 7 (Cronbach's alpha = 0.80). They were introduced as follows using a preamble that includes a statement included in the Administrator-Researcher

Table 5: Stalking victimisation

	LGBTQ respondents				Heterosexual respondents			
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Watched or followed you from a distance, or spied on you with a listening device, camera, or GPS?	68	16.5	344	83.5	478	10.2	4,224	89.8
Approached you or showed up in places, such as your home, workplace, or college when you didn't want them there?	101	24.6	310	75.4	648	13.8	4,051	86.2
Left strange or potentially threatening items for you to find?	25	6.1	387	93.9	134	2.9	4,560	97.1
Sneaked into your home or car and did things to scare you by letting you know they had been there?	16	3.9	396	96.1	124	2.6	4,571	97.4
Sent you unwanted electronic messages such as texts, voice messages, emails, or through social media apps?	144	35.0	268	65.0	963	20.5	3,738	79.5
Left you cards, letters, flowers, or presents when they knew you didn't want them to?	41	10.0	371	90.0	223	4.7	4,474	95.3
Made rude or mean comments to you online?	128	31.1	283	68.9	827	17.6	3,869	82.4
Spread rumours about you online, whether they were true or not?	88	21.5	322	78.5	594	12.7	4,097	87.3

Table 6: Stalking perpetrators

Relationship	LGBTQ		Heterosexual	
	N	%	N	%
Stranger	78	35.0	583	35.2
Acquaintance	64	28.7	425	25.7
Friend	30	13.5	291	17.6
Romantic partner	13	5.8	118	7.1
Former romantic partner	31	13.9	195	11.8
Relative/Family member	4	1.8	7	0.4
Faculty/Staff	3	1.3	36	2.2
Student	136	61.0	1,004	60.6

Campus Climate Collaborative's (ARC3) (2015) Survey's introduction to peer norms measures, and the participants were asked to answer either 'yes' or 'no':

The next questions are about the information your current friends may have given you concerning how to deal with problems in intimate or romantic relationships. When the word 'date' is used, please think of anyone with whom you have or have had a romantic or sexual relationship – short or long term. Please click the bubble which best represents your answer.

To the best of your knowledge, did any of your friends tell you that...

Table 7: Differences in pro-abuse informational support and attachments to abusive peers

	LGBTQ Respondents				Heterosexual Respondents			
	YES		NO		YES		NO	
Pro-abuse informational support	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
You should respond to your date's challenges to your authority by using physical force such as hitting or slapping	19	4.7	383	95.3	100	2.2	4,495	97.8
It is alright for someone to hit a date in certain situations	35	8.8	365	91.3	237	5.2	4,357	94.8
Your dates should have sex with you whenever you want	26	6.5	375	93.5	147	3.2	4,446	96.8
When you spend money on a date, the person should have sex with you in return	32	8.0	370	92.0	213	4.6	4,378	95.4
You should respond to your date's challenges to your authority by insulting them or putting them down	18	4.5	383	95.5	107	2.3	4,481	97.7
You should respond to your date's sexual rejections by using physical force to have sex	5	1.2	396	98.8	46	1.0	4,539	99.0
It is alright to physically force a person to have sex under certain conditions	10	2.5	393	97.5	59	1.3	4,528	98.7
Attachments to abusive peers								
Your friends have made physically forceful attempts at sexual activity with dates which were disagreeable and offensive enough that the dates responded in an offended manner (e.g., crying, fighting, screaming or pleading)	86	22.5	296	77.5	708	15.7	3,796	84.3
Your friends have used physical force such as hitting or beating to resolve conflicts with their dates	91	23.5	296	76.5	775	17.0	3,782	83.0
Your friends insult their dates, swear at them, or withhold affection	170	43.5	221	56.5	1,810	39.9	2,725	60.1

Attachments to abusive peers

To measure this variable, another index was created. Developed by DeKeseredy and Schwartz (1998), this index included the three items also included in Table 7 (Cronbach's alpha = 0.81). The responses were none, 1 or 2, 3 to 5, 6 to 10, more than 10, and don't know. The items were introduced with this preamble: 'To the best of your knowledge, how many of your friends...'

Data analysis

The first step was to present descriptive statistics on the demographics of the sample, the prevalence of both sexual assault and stalking, and on perpetrators of these harms. To measure the effects of pro-abuse informational support and attachment to abusive peers on the dependent variables (sexual assault and stalking), binomial logistic regression analysis was used. Separate analyses were conducted for both heterosexual and LGBTQ students.

Results

CQLS findings show that sexual assault is a major problem at this college, as it is at many other post-secondary institutions across the United States. Still, some people are at higher risk than others. For example, Table 3 shows that 40 per cent ($n = 158$) of the LGBTQ respondents experienced one or more of five types of sexual assault compared to 24 per cent ($n = 1,073$) of the heterosexual participants. What is more, the LGBTQ sexual assault estimate is higher than the one (nearly 25 per cent) uncovered from transgender, gender-queer, gender non-conforming or gender-questioning (TGQN) undergraduates who completed the Association of American Universities (AAU) Campus Climate Survey on Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct (Cantor et al, 2015). This is likely because the AAU study used different measures and collected data from 27 different campuses.

Most commonly, LGBTQ (33.3 per cent, $n = 132$) and heterosexual sexual assault victims (21 per cent, $n = 917$) reported experiencing unwanted sexual contact (for example, fondled, kissed, etc.), but 21 per cent ($n = 82$) of LGBTQ and 11 per cent ($n = 479$) of the 4,477 heterosexual respondents experienced someone trying to have oral, anal, or vaginal sex with them against their consent. Moreover, LGBTQ students (10 per cent, $n = 38$) were more than twice as likely as heterosexuals (4 per cent, $n = 162$) to report that someone put their penis, finger, or other objects into their anus without their consent. Additionally, a higher percentage of LGBTQ students (15.4 per cent, $n = 41$) reported unwanted vaginal penetration than did female heterosexual respondents (10 per cent, $n = 264$) who completed this question ($n = 2,726$). Actually, since a few gay men answered this question, presumably denying vaginal penetration, the true victimisation percentage is undoubtedly higher than 15.4 per cent. Notably, too, LGBTQ participants (12 per cent, $n = 46$) were twice as likely as heterosexual students (5 per cent, $n = 230$) to reveal being victimised by someone who made them have oral sex without their consent. In sum, LGBTQ respondents reported significantly higher rates of victimisation for all the categories listed in Table 3. What is more, the rates of attempted and completed rape reported

by LGBTQ students are higher than many other estimates of such behaviours among heterosexual college students (Richards, 2016; Fedina et al, 2016).

Table 4 shows that, except for the category ‘person with no connection to the college’, LGBTQ and heterosexual students reported roughly equal rates of being attacked by the rest of the perpetrators. Close to 50 per cent of students in both groups were assaulted by students, which is expected since the research site is a large residential college.

LGBTQ students reported a rate of stalking victimisation (54.9, $n = 225$) that is close to 20 per cent higher than that of heterosexual students (36 per cent, $n = 1,681$). LGBTQ respondents also report higher rates of every type of stalking listed in Table 5. Electronic means of stalking are now used more frequently than non-electronic means (DeKeseredy, Dragiewicz and Schwartz, 2017; Navarro, 2016) and this is reflected in Table 5. Even so, a sizeable portion of LGBTQ (24.6 per cent, $n = 101$) and heterosexual students (13.8 per cent, $n = 648$) experienced someone approaching them or showing up in places, such as their homes, workplaces, or colleges when they did not want them there. Moreover, data presented in Table 6 reveals no major percentage differences in the types of perpetrators identified by the respondents. Most respondents in both student groups, though, reported being victimised by students.

The data presented in Tables 7, 8, and 9 help fill a major gap in the literature on peer support and campus violence studies. For example, for every negative support item listed in Table 7, LGBTQ respondents report higher rates than heterosexual students. In total, 16.5 per cent ($n = 66$) of LGBTQ students stated receiving pro-abuse informational support compared to 10.9 per cent ($n = 497$) of heterosexual students. Note, too, that a higher rate of LGBTQ students revealed having attachments to abusive peers (50.6 per cent vs 45.4 per cent). Additionally, to the best of our knowledge, the regression data presented in Tables 8 and 9 are the first to show that negative peer support predicts both LGBTQ and heterosexual students sexual assault and stalking experiences.

Table 8: Relationship between pro-abuse informational support, attachments to abusive peers and sexual assault

	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp (B)
LGBTQ victims						
Pro-abuse informational support	1.335	0.286	21.719	1	0.000	3.800
Constant	-0.642	0.118	0.118	29.6911	0.000	0.526
Attachments to abusive peers	1.303	0.225	33.530	1	0.000	3.679
Constant	-1.099	0.170	41.640	1	0.000	0.333
Heterosexual victims						
Pro-abuse informational support	1.235	0.101	150.903	1	0.000	3.437
Constant	-1.316	0.039	1,110.973	1	0.000	0.268
Attachments to abusive peers	1.266	0.77	273.165	1	0.000	3.548
Constant	-1.828	0.060	926.819	1	0.000	0.161

Table 9: Relationship between pro-abuse informational support, attachments to abusive peers and sexual assault

	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp (B)
LGBTQ victims						
Pro-abuse informational support	1.187	0.314	14.313	1	0.000	3.278
Constant	0.037	0.110	0.110	1	0.740	1.037
Attachments to abusive peers	.880	0.210	17.623	1	0.000	2.411
Constant	-0.263	0.146	3.253	1	0.071	0.769
Heterosexual victims						
Pro-abuse informational support	1.076	0.098	119.819	1	0.000	2.934
Constant	-0.705	0.034	437.777	1	0.000	0.494
Attachments to abusive peers	1.293	0.066	384.130	1	0.000	3.643
Constant	-1.214	0.049	625.993	1	0.000	0.297

Table 8 shows that LGBTQ respondents who received pro-abuse informational support were 3.8 times more likely to report having been sexual assaulted. Similarly, LGBTQ respondents with attachments to abusive peers were 3.7 times more likely to report being sexually assaulted. A similar finding was observed for heterosexual respondents who were 3.4 times more likely to have reported a sexual assault when they reported pro-abuse informational support and 3.5 times more likely when they reported attachment to abusive peers. Table 9 presents a similar relationship when the dependent variable is stalking instead of sexual assault. Pro-abuse informational support and attachment to abusive peers more than doubles the risk that LGBTQ and heterosexual respondents will become victims of stalking.

What is even more salient is that there are no major statistical differences between the two groups of respondents in both tables. Thus, it appears that what could be referred to as a 'non-LGBTQ-specific predictor' (Messinger, 2017) helps explain two major types of assaults on LGBTQ students, including sexual assaults committed by current or former intimate partners, 'hook up' partners, and 'friends with benefits.' However, the association between negative peer support and the harms examined here should not be, at this point in time, interpreted as a causal relationship because it is unknown whether victimisation or peer support came first.

Conclusion

The results support previous studies showing that members of the LGBTQ campus community are at higher risk of experiencing sexual assault than are heterosexuals (see, for example, Ford and Soto-Marquez, 2016). However, a key limitation of the CQLS and many other surveys of LGBTQ people is the grouping of all members of the LGBTQ campus community into 'a larger subpopulation of sexual minorities' for reasons described in the methods section of this paper (Hoxmeier, 2016, p. 2). As well, it is impossible to identify the factors that motivated offenders to sexually assault survey participants. The same can be said about factors that influenced people to stalk respondents. Hence, self-report surveys of potential offenders are necessary in future research.

Studies of stalking on college campuses are in short supply. The one most frequently cited is the AAU survey and its overall stalking rate (4.2 per cent) is markedly lower than those for both the LGBTQ and heterosexual students in our sample. Further, similar to what we uncovered from LGBTQ students, TGQN AAU survey participants reported the highest rates (12.1 per cent undergraduates; 8.4 per cent graduate/professional students), but these figures are also significantly lower than the CQLS rates. The much lower AAU figures are probably a function of methodological differences, such as only using three items to measure stalking.

Nearly 20 years ago, Gwartney-Gibbs and Stockard (1989, p. 185) claimed 'Sexual aggression and victimisation may be a part of peer group culture. That is, the friendship networks from which individuals draw their...partners may allow, or even encourage, male sexual aggression and female victimisation in different degrees.' These scholars' conclusion is based on their surveys of heterosexual students, but CQLS data show that LGBTQ students' peers may play a key role in their sexual victimisation and the same can be said about their stalking experiences. Indeed, this study shows that it is time to move peer support research beyond the realm of studying only the relationship between negative peer group dynamics and violence against heterosexual women. Another important step to take is to develop and test theories of negative peer support and violence against LGBTQ students, such as one informed by the theoretical issues covered previously in this article.

How many LGBTQ CQLS respondents were in first same sex relationships? Unfortunately, the CQLS cannot answer this question, but future quantitative and qualitative college studies need to because studies of non-college populations in other countries (for example, United Kingdom and Canada) show that such relationships are high risk for intimate violence (Donovan and Hester, 2008; 2014; Ristock, 2002). As noted by Donovan et al (2006, p. 13), first same sex relationships have a certain set of conditions in which intimate violence may occur. These are:

- survivors' investment in wanting a same sex relationship as confirmation of their identity and sense of self;
- their lack of confidence in what behaviours are acceptable in intimate same sex relationships; and
- their possible lack of embeddedness in LGBT friendship/community networks in which to voice their concerns, see other relationship role models and seek support and help in addressing their abusive experiences.

Some more limitations warrant attention here. First, since the two peer support measures are gender-neutral, the CQLS cannot discern how many male and female friends of the survey participants provided pro-abuse informational support and engaged in sexual assault and stalking. Additionally, there is no way of knowing the gender-identities and sexual orientations of the CQLS respondents' peers. Moreover, it is unclear how many received negative peer support from heterosexual or LGBTQ peers. Future research needs to address this concern to accurately determine if LGBTQ pro-abuse subcultures are as plentiful as all-male heterosexual ones.

Obviously, much more research on violence against LGBTQ college students is necessary, but the creation of effective policies is equally important. First, campus prevention and awareness programmes that effectively meet the needs of sexual minorities who experience rape, stalking and other types of violence are sorely

needed (Ford and Soto-Marquez, 2016). It is essential to avoid the pitfalls of using only heteronormative approaches because violence against members of the LGBTQ community must be addressed in the contexts in which LGBTQ lives are situated. There is a growing literature showing that both victims and perpetrators of a broad range of violent behaviours are characterised by childhood abuse, intimate partner violence, traumatic coming out experiences, isolation, mental health problems, internalised homophobia, substance abuse and a host of other problems (Ball, 2013; Meyer, 2015).

The US Department of Education's command to have college employees reveal the names of sexual assault survivors to campus administrators, such as those who work in Title IX offices, is worrisome. Title IX is part of the US Education Amendments Act of 1972 and prohibits discrimination, denial and exclusion based on gender in all schools and colleges. It was also created to protect college students who had sexual assault and sexual harassment experiences (Wood et al, 2017). In addition to confronting the trauma of revealing their victimisation to Title IX officials or to other campus authorities, many LGBTQ survivors have a well-founded fear of their communities being stigmatised and believe that reporting their assaults could contribute to further discrimination against them. Regardless of the ongoing struggle for equality, the dominant heterosexual culture is still largely homophobic and transphobic, and it views LGBTQ people as deviant and unhealthy (Guadalupe-Diaz, 2015). This is not to say that all or most campus Title IX offices and campus resource providers are insensitive or prejudiced. Even so, LGBTQ survivors of sexual violence require services that recognise the above issues identified by Ball (2013) or else they will continue to suffer in silence. As well, many heterosexual/straight survivors will not reveal their experiences for fear of facing a humiliating investigation (Sokolow, 2013).

On top of effectively and sensitively meeting survivors' needs, it is essential to address pro-abuse attitudes and behaviours that influence peers to perpetuate and legitimate the harms examined in this study. One promising, progressive and widely used initiative designed to meet this goal on US campuses is the Green Dot Violence Prevention Program. The programme helps participants identify contexts that could lead to gender-based violence, teaches them to engage in safe means of bystander intervention and to do other things, such as organising events to raise money to support violence prevention (University of Kentucky Violence Intervention and Prevention Center, 2012). Though there is evidence that the programme is effective among heterosexual students (Coker et al, 2011), as McMahon (2017, p. 239) observes, 'Developing specific bystander intervention strategies to align with the norms of various subgroups on campus is an important next step.'

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