A first investigation into gender minority adolescents’ sexting experiences

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## Sample

1293 respondents with an average age of 14.79 were selected based on sexting and cyberbullying behavior from a total of 4255 respondents from 20 middle schools and high schools throughout all Dutch-speaking provinces of Belgium. 636 of the respondents indicated that they were registered as a boy (49.2%) and 657 were registered as a girl (50.8%). 18 respondents felt different than the gender that was indicated on their identity card (1.4%).

## Implications For Stakeholders About

Researchers

# Abstract

Gender minority adolescents, such as transgender, gender nonconforming, gender
diverse and non-binary youth, may face unique challenges with regard to online sexual
communication. They may be especially vulnerable for sexting-related risks. The aim of this study
is to explore the sexting experiences of gender minority youth among a school-based sample.
This brief exploratory study reports on a survey that was conducted among 1293 re\_x0002\_spondents with an average age of 14.79 years old (SD = 1.97) in the Dutch-speaking area of Belgium, and compares engagement in sexting experiences between cisgender and gender mi\_x0002\_nority youth. The results of our exploratory study show that gender minority adolescents were more likely to have ever been pressured to send a sexting image. There were no significant differences with regard to receiving sexts, or receiving forwarded sexts. None of the gender minority youth reported that they had forwarded a sexting image from someone else, as opposed to 9.3% of
cisgender youth who had forwarded a sext. Despite the explorative nature of our study, the results suggest that gender minority youth may be at an increased risk to experience sexting-related pressure. Additional research is
needed to investigate the sexting experiences of gender minority adolescents. Gender minority
youth may benefit from education about safer sexting, and specifically ways to cope with sexting\_x0002\_related pressure.

# Outcome

"Three of the 18 gender minority youth (16.7%) had sent a sexting image of themselves in the two months prior to our survey. The data did not allow to assess whether gender minority youth are more likely to experiment with taking and sending self-made sexually explicit images. They do are more likely to have ever received pressure to send a sexting image, with 44.4% of the gender minority respondents reporting to have experienced sexting-related pressure as opposed to around 20% of cisgender youth. As gender minority youth may use the Internet more frequently to build relationships with romantic partners, compared to their cisgender peers
adolescents, they are more likely to experience online harassment and that they may be disproportionally affected by digital risks. They may face unique challenges with regard to safety and anonymity in online spaces, and may be especially vulnerable for digital forms pressure and abuse. It calls attention to this understudied population and may provide direction for future research." (Van Ouytsel et al., 2020, pp. 215-216)