

Persuasion strategies perceived by adolescents in situations of online grooming (pp. 243-262)

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Online grooming is the process by which an adult sexually victimizes a minor using the means offered by the Internet. The objective of this study was to analyze the prevalence of persuasion and influence strategies used by aggressors to manipulate and involve minors in online grooming, as well as gender differences. The initial sample consisted of 2731 adolescents between 12 and 15 years old (50.6% girls) who completed a questionnaire on sexual solicitations and interactions with adults and another on persuasion based on the principles of influence of Cialdini (2001). 408 Minors (14.9%) were involved in grooming during the last year (61.3% girls, mean age= 14.23, $DT= 0.92$). It was found a highly frequent use of the principles of influence, being the principle of sympathy the most experienced (up to 50.9%). Girls experienced more frequently all the principles of influence except the principle of authority, in which there were no sex differences. These findings provide useful information for understanding and preventing sexual victimization of minors on the Internet.