The Association Between Relationship Power and Dating Violence Among LGBT and Cisgender Heterosexual Adolescent Women

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BACKGROUND

Dating violence (DV) is prevalent in adolescent women's romantic relationships. Power equity in relationships has the potential to buffer against experiences of DV, however, this has generally only been examined in cisgender heterosexual (CisHet) adolescent women's relationships. To fill this gap, we examined the association between relationship power and DV among LGBT adolescent women and their CisHet peers.

PARTICIPANTS

CisHet Adolescent Women
Sample size: 53.9% (N=213)
Age *(M, SD)*: 16.0 (1.58)
Race (white): 41.9% (N=81)
Initiated sex (yes): 59.3% (N=124)
ACEs *(M, SD)*: 3.1 (2.23)

LGBT Adolescent Women
Sample size: 46.1% (N=182)
Age *(M, SD)*: 15.8 (1.59)
Race (white): 54.1% (N=92)
Initiated sex (yes): 75.6% (N=137)
ACEs *(M, SD)*: 4.7 (2.09)

METHODOLOGY

Data
Baseline data from pre-surveys administered with one of two evidence-based sexual health education programming (*Teen Outreach Program* or *Be Proud! Be Responsible!*) to adolescents residing in areas of high unintended pregnancies.

Measures
Healthy relationship skills: 9-items, α = .83
Communication skills: 6-items, α = .81
Gender role attitudes: 5-items, α = .58
Relationship power (Overall, Activities, Time, and Sex): Equal, participant power, or partner power
DV (Physical, Cyber, Control, or Coercive): all yes/no

Bivariate Associations
Chi-square and T-tests to test for differences in relationship power and DV between CisHet and LGBT adolescent women (Table 1)

Generalized Structural Equation Modeling
GSEM used to assess associations between skills and values, relationship power, and DV (Table 2)
All models controlled for age, sexual initiation, and ACEs (Stata, v. 15)

RESULTS

Table 1
Bivariate Associations

Variable	M(SD) or f(%)	
	CisHet (n = 213)	LGBT (n = 182)
Physical DV+	33 (17.46)	63 (37.50)**
Cyber DV+	50 (26.18)	64 (38.10)*
Controlling DV+	47 (24.74)	76 (45.24)**
Coercive DV+	28 (14.66)	44 (26.35)*
Rel power overall*		
Equal power	58 (38.93)	64 (43.84)
Participant power	59 (39.60)	32 (21.92)
Partner power	32 (21.48)	50 (34.25)
Rel power activities*		
Equal power	70 (48.61)	71 (48.98)
Participant power	48 (33.33)	32 (21.77)
Partner power	26 (18.06)	43 (29.25)
Rel power time*		
Equal power	62 (45.26)	69 (48.94)
Participant power	49 (35.77)	31 (21.99)
Partner power	26 (18.98)	41 (29.08)
Rel power sex		
Equal power	57 (47.11)	64 (52.89)
Participant power	32 (26.45)	22 (18.18)
Partner power	32 (26.45)	35 (28.93)

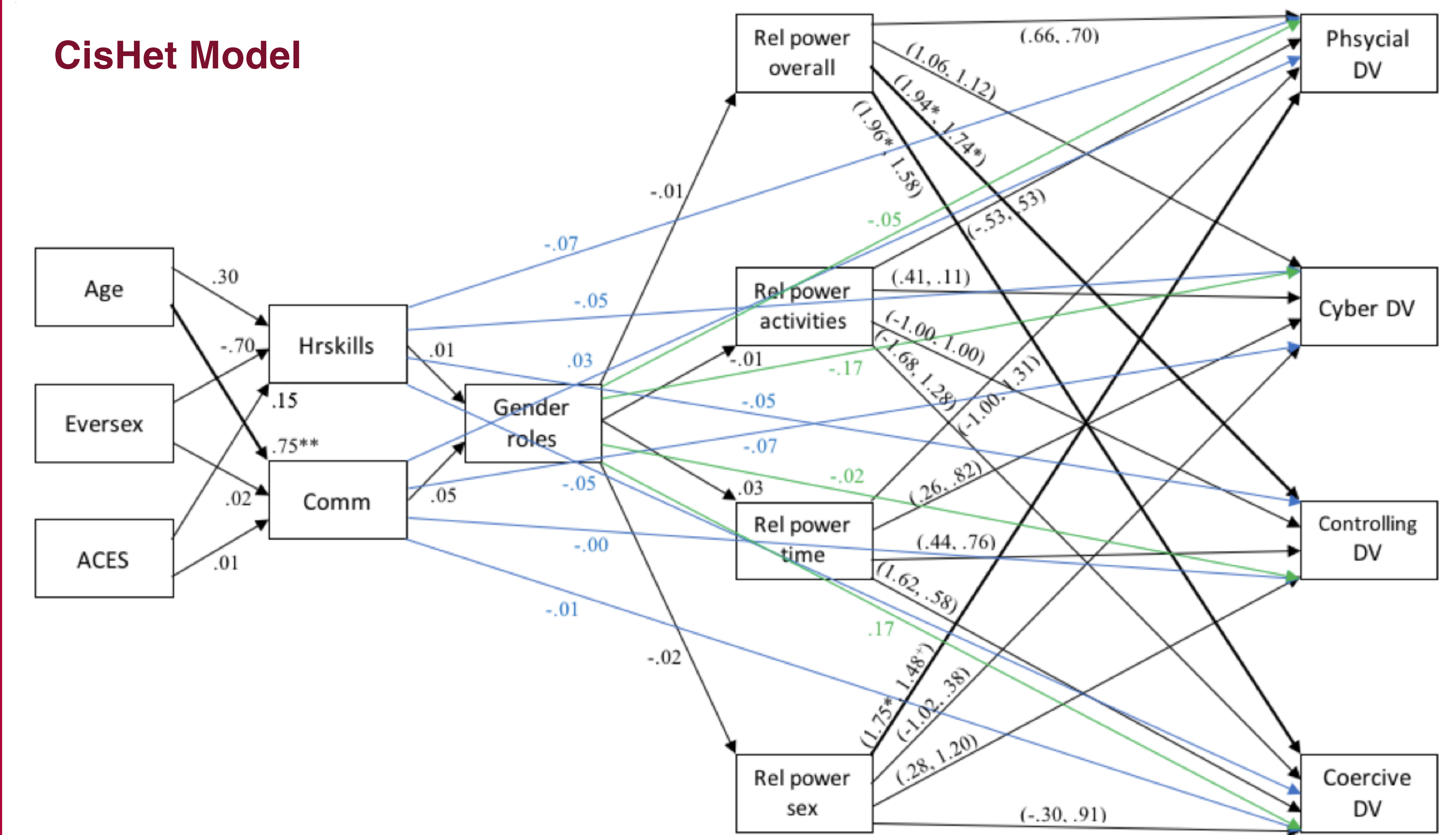*Note.* (N = 395) +frequency and percentage are for "yes" responses. * p<.05, ** p<.001

Table 2
GSEM Results

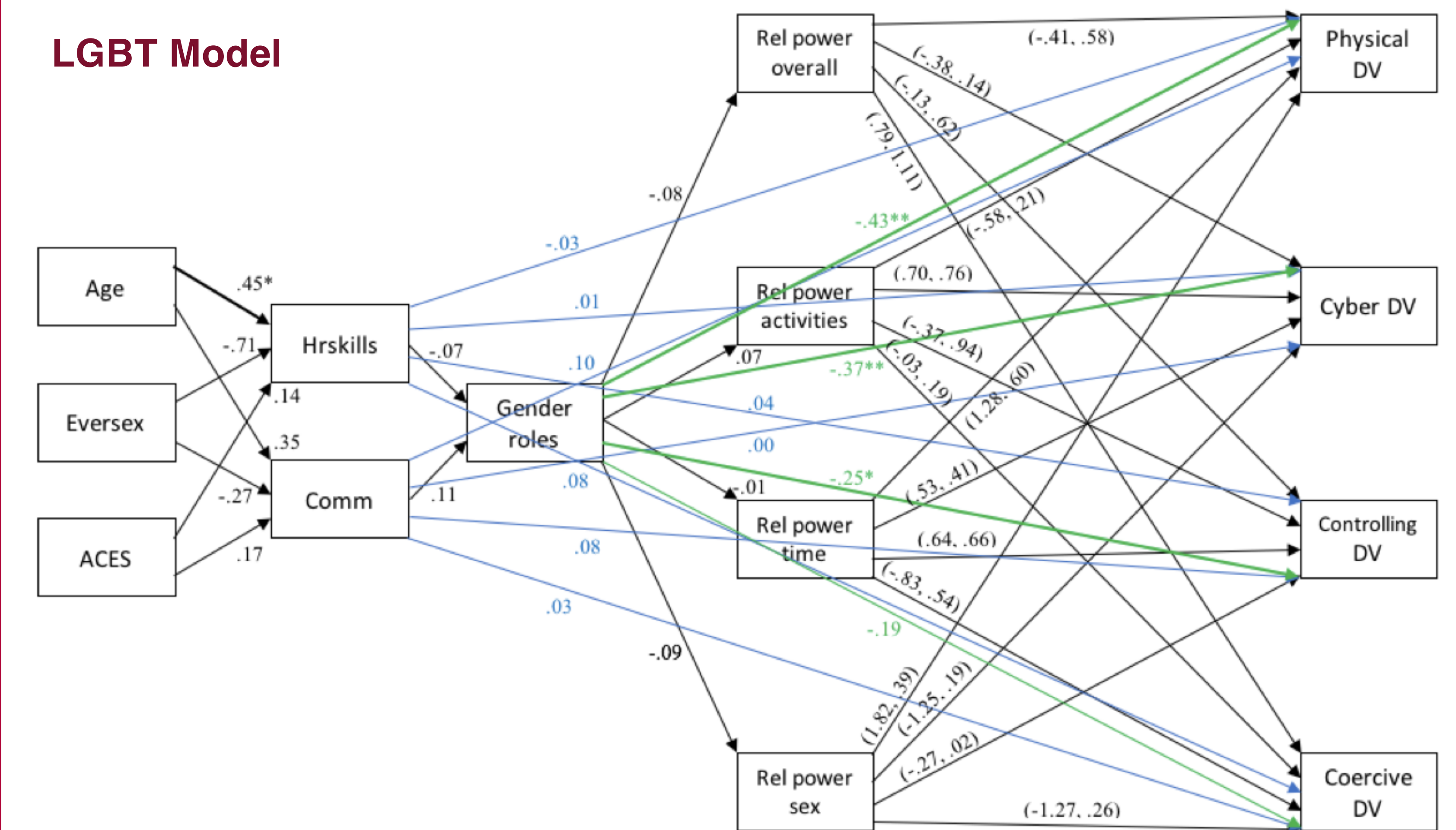|	CisHet		LGBT	
	β	SE	β	SE
Gender roles				
Physical DV	-0.05	0.12	-0.43**	0.12
Cyber DV	-0.17	0.12	-0.37**	0.11
Controlling DV	-0.02	0.11	-0.25*	0.10
Coercive DV	0.17	0.14	-0.19	0.10
Rel power overall (1, 2)				
Physical DV	(0.66, 0.70)	(0.78, 0.81)	(-0.41, 0.54)	(0.79, 0.73)
Cyber DV	(1.06, 1.12)	(0.68, 0.79)	(-0.38, -0.14)	(0.74, 0.69)
Controlling DV	(1.94, 1.74)	(074**, 0.81*)	(-0.13, 0.62)	(0.71, 0.68)
Coercive DV	(1.96, 1.58)	(0.95*, 1.00)	(0.79, 1.11)	(0.77, 0.73)
Rel power activities (1, 2)				
Physical DV	(-0.53, 0.53)	(0.88, 0.82)	(-0.58, 0.21)	(0.88, 0.67)
Cyber DV	(0.41, -0.11)	(0.75, 0.80)	(0.70, 0.76)	(-.78, 0.65)
Controlling DV	(-1.00, -1.00)	(0.81, 0.84)	(-0.37, -0.94)	(0.75, 0.64)
Coercive DV	(-1.68, -1.28)	(0.99, 0.92)	(-0.03, -0.19)	(0.82, 0.67)
Rel power time (1, 2)				
Physical DV	(-1.00, 01.31)	(0.89, 0.93)	(1.28, -0.60)	(0.77, 0.70)
Cyber DV	(0.26, -0.82)	(0.76, 0.89)	(0.53, -0.41)	(0.69, 0.68)
Controlling DV	(0.44, -0.76)	(0.76, 0.86)	(0.64, 0.66)	(0.68, 0.66)
Coercive DV	(1.62, 0.58)	(0.92, 0.96)	(-0.83, -0.54)	(0.75, 0.69)
Rel power sex (1, 2)				
Physical DV	(1.75, 1.48)	(0.87*, 0.75+)	(-0.82, 0.39)	(0.80, 0.69)
Cyber DV	(-1.02, -0.38)	(0.76, 0.70)	(-1.25, -0.19)	(0.77, 0.65)
Controlling DV	(0.28, 1.20)	(0.74, 0.72)	(-0.27, -0.02)	(0.72, 0.62)
Coercive DV	(-0.30, 0.91)	(0.90, 0.82)	(-1.27, 0.26)	(0.83, 0.65)

Note. +p= .05, *p<.05, **p<.001, Reference category for relationship power is equal power. Only relationship power results are displayed; full results on handout.

CisHet Model

LGBT Model

DISCUSSION

- Our findings indicate that while equitable decision-making power in relationships is a salient factor in CisHet adolescent women's relationships, the more salient factor in LGBT adolescent women's relationships are gender role attitudes.
- Interventions and social work practitioners aiming to reduce dating violence among LGBT adolescent women should concentrate their focus on increasing relationship skills and attitudes.