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Bullying and Victimization Experienced By School Children: A Review

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ABSTRACT

Bullying and peer victimization represents a significant social problem among school children and adolescents both nationally and internationally. Bullying behavior among youth remains a constant threat and it is carefully considered by several fundamental challenges to appraising its negative consequences associated with physical and mental health. Bullying intentionally causes substantial effects on the person bullied, the person who bullies, the person bullied and bullies others, and the bystander present during the bullying event. Vulnerable children whom experience bullying may suffer short and long-term physical and mental health difficulties, as well as academic problems. The possible effects among children typically include depression and anxiety; decreased interest in social activities that used wisely to bring pleasure; marked changes in proper diet and adequate sleep; lower school achievement and class attendance. Many of these key issues might undoubtedly continue into responsible adulthood, allowed latter naturally resulting in substance abuse criminal convictions and domestic violence or aggravated child abuse. Bullying among school children has been typically ignored by health authorities but should be accurately measured as an important threat factor and safeguarding the issue.

KEY WORDS: School children, School Health, Bullying, Victimization, Perpetrator.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Bullying is an everlasting problem in the lives of school children. Bullying represents an unwanted aggressive behavior of someone towards the other person. Bullying behavior involves the perceived power imbalance that has been found harmful on the targeted person and this is frequent aggressive behavior that is less favorable for the victims.¹ Bullying assumes various forms at different ages, growing in complexity and sensitivity as children develop. Bullying and victimization occurs to children both in-person and indirectly, through threats and rumors. Physical violence remains the prevalent form of bullying among children. This abuse typically evolves into verbal or social bullying as students mature, often with one or more bullies excluding or manipulating their victim through several mediums. Bullying equally occurs through technology or cyber space, when an individual or group uses an electronic medium to engage in deliberate, repeated and hostile communication exchanges with the intent to harm others. The popularity of social media has generated this form of bullying more prevalent, as technology-based platforms allow perpetrators to share unkind words and images anonymously. Bullying has acknowledged an inordinate deal of responsiveness that highlights the consequences of bullying behavior on academic, social and emotional outcomes.^{2, 3} The effect of predisposition-related bullying should not be underestimated. Bullying must be recognized, understood and taken seriously.

II. DEFINITION AND CONCEPT OF BULLYING

Bullying is defined as a negative and often aggressive or manipulative act or series of acts by one or more individual against another individual or people usually over a period of time. It is abusive and is based on an imbalance of power." The behavior is intentional and can result in harm or distress.⁴ Most definitions of bullying include repeated aggressive acts that are intended to harm without or provocation by the victim.⁵ Both children being bullied and who bully others may have serious, lasting problems. The authors suggest that bullying represent such a complex issue because it involves three factors. To be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

An imbalance of power: School aged children who bully manipulate their power, physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or personal popularity, to dominate or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in various situations, even if they involve the similar people.

Intention to cause harm: purposeful acts may cause damage on the directed children including educational, social, physical and mental health.

Repetition: bullying behaviors happen more than once or demonstrate the potential to happen more than once.⁶

Children and adolescents may experience various types of bullying. Bullying can be either direct or indirect. Direct bullying consists of physical and verbal aggression, whereas indirect bullying involves relational aggression. Cyber bullying is an emerging problem which may be more complex to universally recognize and resolve with other types of bullying.⁷ According to one extensive study, the following percentages of middle schools students had experienced these various types of bullying: name calling (44.2 %); teasing (43.3 %); spreading rumors or lies (36.3%); pushing or shoving (32.4%); hitting, slapping, or kicking (29.2%); leaving out (28.5%); threatening (27.4%); stealing belongings (27.3%); provocative comments or gestures (23.7%); e-mail or blogging (9.9%).⁸ Every year about 21 percent of U.S. middle and high-school students are victims of bullying.⁹ ⁴Although incidence proportions of bullying differ through various survey and individuals calculated, about 22 % of children age between 12–18 years stated being targeted by bullying behavior during their school life.¹⁰

III.COMMON FORMS OF BULLYING

Bullying behavior can take different forms in different environments according to the factors that determine the bully's relationships with others. Bullying behavior can take a variety of forms including:

Physical Bullying: Which includes hitting, kicking, pinching, spitting, biting, tripping, shoving or intimidating another person, mean or rude hand gestures, touching another person when they don't like, being made afraid of being hurt and taking or breaking someone's belongings.^{11,12}

Verbal Bullying: Includes name-calling, insulting, repeated teasing, racist remarks, making fun of someone being sarcastic in a hurtful way, taunting, threatening to cause harm and unkind comments about the way someone looks or behaves.^{11,12}

Social Bullying: It involves hurting someone's relationships or reputation. This includes: ignoring or committing someone out on purpose, excluding someone from social groups, destroying relationships and friendships, embarrassing someone in public, sharing information or images that will cause an adverse effect on the other person and telling lies or stories about someone to make others not like them.¹²

Cyber Bullying: It involves the use of digital technology, such as mobile phones or the internet to cause harm to others through creating false profiles, posting hurtful or negative information on social websites, sending mean, untrue or hurtful text messages, posting inappropriate or embarrassing pictures or videos.^{12,4}

IV.CONTEXT OF BULLYING

Bullying may occur within multiple contexts such as at school and school events, travelling in school bus, a youth's local community, and through the social media. Bullying can occur anywhere, but it generally occurs at or near schools in places where adult supervision is limited or nonexistent. Specific examples: school hallways, cafeterias, playgrounds, buses, locker rooms and classrooms before lessons.¹³ Within these contexts bullying can include a range of behaviors like physical aggression, verbal aggression, efforts to isolate or harm a youth by attacking his or her relationships with others, or damaging property. Bullying that occurs using technology is considered electronic bullying and is viewed as a social context or specific location, such as a school, where verbal, relationalbullying, and damaging property (for example deleting personal data) invariably occurs through electronic means. Bullying is often witnessed or known about by other youth who may also be harmed as a result. Because bullying is often witnessed, the response to bullying by adults and youth may encourage or inhibit bullying behaviors.^{14,15}

V. CONSEQUENCES OF BULLY PERPETRATION ANDVICTIMIZATION

Bullying has significant short and long-standing suppressing and expressing emotional distresses for the youth who are involved in bullying behavior.¹⁶

Children Who Are Bullied:

The psychological consequences of bullying among children who are bullied, may suffer from depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem, self-harming behavior especially for girls, alcohol and drug use and dependence, aggression, and involvement in violence or crime especially for boys. Cyberbullying also happens with computers or mobile devices that has been linked to mental health problems.¹⁷

Physical consequences of bullying can be obvious and direct, such as being injured from a physical attack. However, the ongoing stress and trauma of being bullied can also lead to physical problems over time. A child who is bullied could develop sleep disorders - such as difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, stomachaches, headaches, heart palpitations, dizziness, bedwetting, and chronic pain and somatization (i.e., a syndrome of distressful, physical symptoms that cannot be explained by a medical cause).^{18,19,20}

Children who are victims of bullying may lack a feeling of school satisfaction, which may be another factor for increase in drop out and truancy rates.²¹

Children Who Are Bullying Others and Those Who Witnessing Bullying Episodes:

The consequences of bullying on the bully may include: Poor school performance (missed school due to suspensions increases this risk), psychosomatic problem, increased truancy risk, difficulty maintaining social relationships and also more likely to engage in illegal behaviors, such as drug use and other anti-social behaviors.

Approximately 25 percent of school bullies will be convicted of a criminal offense in their adult years.^{2,3} Some research has found that bullying witnesses experience anxiety and insecurity based on their own fears of retaliation.

Children Who Are Bullying Others And Also Being Bullied:

Children and adolescents who are involved in bullying others and who are also being bullied by others are at the greatest risk for negative mental and physical health consequences, compared to those who only bullying others or only being bullied. These children and adolescents may experience a combination of psychological problems, a negative perception of themselves and others, physical health problems, poor social skills, conduct problems and rejection by their peer group.²²

Academic consequences of bullying among children the research has consistently shown that bullying can have a negative impact on how well children and adolescents do in school. It has a negative impact on both grades and standardized test scores starting as early as kindergarten and continuing through high school.

VI. PREVENTING BULLYING AND VICTIMIZATION

How Can We Prevent Bullying?

For the health of all children and the community, it is significant that schools, families, health and social organizations address this issue and raise awareness about bullying and peer victimization. There are several effective approach focuses on changing school and classroom climates by:

- Raising awareness about bullying: Where lessons are universally designed to embed awareness and acceptance activities into the classroom curriculum and proactively address student need. Instruction is differentiated to understand the societal and academic requirements of the student and provided that a stronger sense of independence.
- Providing choice opportunities for students, so they can engage in activities that they find reinforcing, and establishing a deeper sense of belonging within the classroom environment.
- Establishing a systematically structure cooperative learning groups, so students have the opportunity to develop socially appropriate behaviors among their same-aged peer group.

- Providing opportunities for sharing and communication, so students can develop age-appropriate communication skills in a comfortable environment.^{23,24}
- Educating school staff regarding reporting and following up on incidents, support and helping perpetrators stop their bullying behaviors.
- Implementing anti-bullying policies and laws by forming clear rules and established social norms against bullying,
- Increasing the teachers' involvement and supervision to prevent bullying behavior among children.
- Providing instruction to parents on how to discuss with their kids about bullying preventive methods.²⁵ Studies also have shown that adults, including parents, can help prevent bullying by maintaining the lines of communication open, talking to their children about bullying, encouraging them to accomplish what they desire, modeling kindness and respect, and encouraging them to get help when they are involved in bullying or recognize others who need help.^{24, 26} Incorporating the community and family participation in preventing bullying through creating a public awareness to promote the revelation of bullying incidents among their children and neighborhood.²⁵

Over all School administrators, staff, educators, health care professionals, parents and community can help prevent bullying by discussing it in classes, building a safe school environment and by creating a bullying prevention strategy in their community.

VII. CONCLUSION

Bullying can leave physical and emotional scars. Bullying is a multifaceted impression, which is undesirably disturbing the cooperative among school-aged children and adolescents. Childhood bullying exerts serious effects on both short and long-term health of children. It is critical to examine the consequences of bullying on children and adolescents, how it relates to other violent behaviors and mental health challenges, in order to effectively address them prompt intervention and long-term follow-up can help mediate some of these effects. It is imperative that schools, families, and communities work together to understand bullying and its consequences and find ways to decrease and hopefully eradicate, bullying both in schools and communities.

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