



Bullying In Canada

Full Reference

Craig, W. M. (2004). Bullying in Canada in the *Canadian World Health Organization Report on the Health of youth in Canada*. Health Canada.

Key Words

Bullying, victimization

Main Questions

How many children are victimized by bullying, and how are they bullied? How many children bully others and what methods do they use when bullying in Grades 6 through 10?

Background

Past research has shown that children who bully are more likely to use other forms of aggression, sexual harassment, and dating violence in adolescence and are also more likely to engage in illegal activities, such as delinquency and substance use. Children who are victimized by bullying also experience many difficulties later in life such as depression and anxiety. Some victimized children may also start to bully others. Even the children who watch bullying (bystanders) may be drawn into bullying and play a role in bullying interactions.

Who Was Involved

Approximately 6500 Canadian students from grades 6 to 10 were surveyed as part of a larger international study across 34 countries.

What We Found

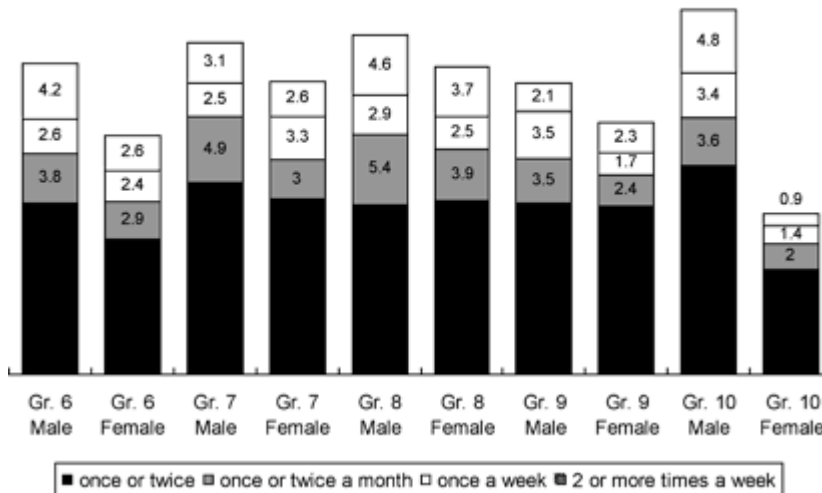
In all grades, more boys than girls report being victimized and boys report higher frequency of bullying than do girls. [Similarly, more boys than girls report bullying others]. Does this not say the same thing twice? If so, omit Bullying and victimization was at the highest level in Grade 10 for boys and Grade 8 for girls. Fewer children report bullying others than being victims, suggesting that children who bully may target more than one individual, or that they do not regard their aggressive behaviour as bullying. Many children reported being both being victimized by others **and** bullying others, with more boys reporting being involved in both behaviours than girls. The majority of victims reported being bullied by teasing and by being excluded or having rumours spread about them. Boys were twice as likely to report physical victimization than were girls. Physical victimization decreased as age increased for both boys and girls.





Rate of non-physical bullying increased with age. A substantial number of children had experienced sexual harassment as a form of bullying. Boys were more likely to report being bullied because of their race compared to girls. Approximately 14% of children reported being bullied because of their religion. Bullies reported engaging in lower rates of teasing, spreading rumours, physical aggression, sexual harassment, and racial or religious harassment than was reported by victims. This difference suggests that bullies interpret and experience behaviours differently. For example, victims and bullies may not agree on what behaviours are aggressive. The figure below presents the frequency of victimization.

How often have you been bullied but not bully others



Implications

1. For the majority of children, who are relatively uninvolved in bullying, universal programming will likely be effective in changing behaviour and generating lower rates (or lowering rates) of bullying. Another group of children, those who are occasionally directly involved in bullying, may require support beyond universal intervention. For children who are involved in frequent and serious bullying and/or victim problems, identification and intensive interventions are required.
2. Early intervention would reduce the problem behaviours before they start.

3. Bullying is a behaviour that takes many forms and some forms are more common than others. The range of harassing behaviours that victimized children experience highlights the need to help aggressive children identify these behaviours as forms of harassment and teach them respect for differences, whether sexual, racial or religious. We also need to design intervention programs that recognize the changing forms of bullying as students age.

A significant number of children are experiencing abuse at the hands of their peers. In Canada, we have a particularly high number of bully-victims. The high prevalence rates highlight the urgency with which we need to address this significant problem to ensure that every child is safe at school.