

BULLYING AND RISK OF SUICIDAL TENDENCIES AMONG ADOLESCENCE

Poonam Nalawade, Dr. Priyanka Kacker

Psychosocial Counselor
Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA), Mumbai, Maharashtra

Assistant Professor
School of Behavioural Science, National Forensic Sciences University, Gandhinagar, Gujarat

Abstract

Generally children are considered to be naughty and mischievous and therefore many a times, many of the things that they do get ignored by us, may it be good or bad. Some of these behaviors might be harmful or dangerous to them or to others. One of such behavior is that of bullying. Bullying is an act which can have many serious negative consequences on the physical, social and psychological health of the victim. There are various researches which show that there are many negative consequences of bullying on the personal lives of the victims as it affects their physical health, social well-being and psychological health. Some researches also show that the victims of bullying may have serious problems such as anxiety issues, depression, suicidal ideation, etc. Taking this into account the current research tries to understand whether the act of bullying leads to risk of suicidal tendencies among adolescents as suicide is also most prevalent among youngsters. So in this research the correlation between bullying and risk of suicidal tendency is to be known. In this research, the researcher has conducted two psychological tests on adolescents and tried to find out the correlation between the total score obtained to know the correlation between bullying and risk of suicidal tendencies.

Results: The results of this study shows that there is significantly positive correlation between bullying and risk of suicidal tendencies but this correlation very low.

Key Words: Bullying, Suicidal Risk & Tendencies, School Children

INTRODUCTION

Children are considered to be naughty and mischievous. Many a times even people don't tend to bother about their mischievous behaviour. But this behaviour can also lead them to do wrong things such as bullying. Bullying is a form of abuse that takes place several times. Generally it doesn't come in forefront as many people ignore it as they consider it a mischievous behaviour. The definition given by National Center Against Bullying and PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center has given proper definitions of bullying these definitions are as follows:

According to National Centre Against Bullying, 'Bullying is when an individual or a group of people with more power, repeatedly and intentionally causes hurt or harm to another person or group of people who feel helpless to respond.'

PACER's National Bullying Prevention Center defines Bullying as, 'intentional behaviour, which is typically repeated, that hurts, harms, or humiliates a student, either physically or emotionally, and can happen while at school, in the community or online.'

Bullying is thus can be said as an act of intentionally and repetitively causing harm to an individual or group of people who are weaker by the person or a group who are comparatively stronger than them.

Talking about suicide, The World Health Organization (WHO) defines suicide as an act of deliberately killing oneself. Suicide is also considered to be the second major reason for the deaths of youngsters.

The American Psychological Association (APA) defines suicide as an act of killing yourself, most often as a result of depression or other mental illness.

According to the Section 309 of IPC Attempt to Suicide was a punishable offense under the law. The punishment for attempt to suicide was fine and upto one year of imprisonment. On 10 December 2014 the Mental Health Bill was passed in Rajya Sabha after which Attempt to suicide was decriminalized. Today there are various psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors and social works who organize workshops, seminars and awareness programs for suicide prevention. There are various suicide prevention centers and toll free suicide prevention helpline services that works 24X7 for suicide prevention.

As we have seen that bullying can affect the psychological health of a victim and can lead to various psychological problems such as anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, etc. And the adolescents are in a crucial stage of their life as they are prone to fall under wrong influences. So the current research tries to understand that if adolescents are experiencing bullying will those leads to risk of suicidal tendency among them.

Therefore in this study the correlation between bullying and risk of suicidal is to be found out.

METHODOLOGY

Objective

The objective of the current study is to understand the relationship between bullying and risk of suicidal tendencies among adolescents.

Participants

The participants in this research study were the adolescents from the age group of 14 years to 16 years. These adolescents were students of Class 9th, 10th and 11th. The entire samples were the residents of Mumbai, Maharashtra and were of Indian Nationality. Most of the students were of A. F. A. C. English School. These students included both males and females. The sample size of the current study was 120 this sample size was significant. The students were selected using convenient sampling method.

Inclusion criteria

Students of Class 9th to 11th Class
Age group: 14 to 16 years.
Gender: Male and Female
Could understand English

Exclusion criteria

Students who are not in class 9th to 11th
Adolescents who couldn't understand English
Students below and above the age of 14 to 16 years

Hypothesis: There would be a positive correlation between bullying and suicidal risk among adolescence.

Variables:

Bullying: Bullying Score which is obtained through Illinois Bullying Scale.
Risk of Suicidal Tendency: Score of Suicide Probability which obtained through Suicide Probability Scale.

Instruments used:

Two psychological tests were administered for understanding the relationship between bullying and risk of suicidal tendencies. The descriptions of these two psychological tests are as follows:

Illinois Bullying Scale (Student Version): Illinois Bullying Scale is a psychometric tool which is used for measuring victimization, physical aggression and bullying among youth of 8 to 18 years. It is an 18 items scale. It is a self-report measure. The reliability of this test was found to be Cronbach Alpha coefficient 0.87. This is 16 item scale in which items 1-9 are of bullying whereas items 10-16 are of victimization.

Suicide Probability Scale: Suicide Probability Scale is a psychometric tool which is used for measuring Suicidal tendencies among individuals above 14 years of age. It is a self-report measure. This test consists of 34 items distributed along 4 sub tests namely Hopelessness, Suicidal Ideation, Negative Self-Evaluation, and Hostility. The internal reliability of Suicide Probability Scale is 0.93.

Procedure: A group of subjects were approached they were then given a brief introduction about the current study. They were made aware about the importance of the study and the reason behind the conduction of the study. Then Illinois Bullying Scale was explained briefly to them and instructions regarding this test were also given to them. The consent was obtained from them in a written format. They were also made aware of their right to deny or withdraw the consent. After this the test sheet was distributed among the subjects and each item of the test was explained to them. After the completion of this test, the test sheets were taken back. After this Suicide Probability Scale was explained briefly to them and instructions regarding this test were given to them. Then the test sheets were distributed of the test among the subjects and each item of the test was explained to them. After the completion of this test the test sheets were taken back. After the administration of both the tests was completed the subjects were debriefed about both the tests collectively. Then they were thanked for their cooperation in the administration of the psychological tests in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In current research the correlation between bullying and risk of suicidal tendencies was found out. For this the two test Illinois Bullying Scale and Suicide Probability scale was administered and the correlation between the scores of these two tests was found out. The score that were obtained of this research were found using SPSS version 20.

For finding the correlation between the scores of Illinois Bullying Scale and Suicide Probability Scale firstly the Mean and Standard Deviation of all the dimensions of these two tests was found out. s

Table. 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the dimension of the two tests.

Dimensions	Mean	Standard Deviation
Bullying	7.20	4.992
Victimization	3.99	3.195
Hopelessness	24.08	6.238
Suicidal Ideation	16.69	5.835
Negative Self Evaluation	15.56	3.671
Hostility	14.73	4.641

Secondly the correlation between the dimensions of the two tests: Illinois Bullying Scale and Suicide Probability Scale were found out. . In this table the first column represents all the dimensions of the two tests administered. The second column represents the mean of all the dimensions of the two scales and the third column represents the standard deviation of all the dimension of the two scales. The first two dimensions mentioned in this table: Bullying and Victimization are the dimensions of Illinois Bullying Scale. The dimensions: Hopelessness, Suicidal Ideation, Negative Self Evaluation and Hostility are the dimensions of Suicide Probability Scale. The mean of Hopelessness was highest which was 24.08. It was followed by the mean of Suicidal ideation which was 16.69. The third highest mean was that of Negative Self Evaluation which was found to be 15.56. The fourth highest mean was of Hostility which was 14.73. The mean of Bullying was low which 7.20. And the mean of Victimization was lowest of all the dimensions and was 3.99. The mean of victimization and bullying can be low due to the fact that these two dimensions are of Illinois Bullying Scale which is a short scale with less number of items compared to all the other dimensions which were of Suicide Probability Scale which was a long scale that had more number of items.

The Standard deviation of the hopelessness was found to very high which was 6.238. It was followed by the standard deviation of Suicidal Ideation which was 5.385. The third highest standard deviation was of Bullying that was 4.992. The fourth highest standard deviation was of Hostility which was 4.641. The standard deviation of Negative Self Evaluation was 3.671. The standard deviation of Victimization was the lowest of all the dimensions which was 3.195.

Table. 2: Correlation between the dimensions of the two tests

Dimensions	Bullying	Victimization	Hopelessness	Suicidal Ideation	Negative Self Evaluation	Hostility
Bullying	1	.367**	.298**	.264**	-.053	.471**
Victimization	.367**	1	.329**	.192**	-.096**	.128
Hopelessness	.298**	.329**	1	.522**	.021**	.424**
Suicidal Ideation	.264**	.192**	.522**	1	.066**	.350*
Negative Self Evaluation	-.053	-.096	.021	.066	1	.108
Hostility	.471**	.128	.424**	.350**	.108**	1

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

And lastly the correlation between the scores obtained from the two tests: Illinois Bullying Scale and Suicide Probability Scale were found out. The correlation between Hopelessness and Suicidal Ideation was the only correlation which was at moderate level as it was found to be .522. This correlation was also significant at 0.01 level. The correlations between some of the other dimensions are positive and significant as well at 0.01 but they are weak. These correlations are: Bullying and Victimization .367, Bullying and Hopelessness .298, Bullying and Suicidal Ideation .264, Bullying and Hostility .471, Victimization and Hopelessness .329, Victimization and Suicidal Ideation .192, and Hopelessness and Hostility .424. Between Bullying and Negative Self Evaluation there no correlation as it is -.053 and Victimization and Negative Self Evaluation as it is -.96 but the correlation between Victimization and Negative Self Evaluation is significant at 0.01 level. There is no correlation between Suicidal Ideation and Negative Self Evaluation as it is found to be .066 but it is significant at 0.01 level and even there is no correlation between Negative Self Evaluation and Hostility as it was found to be .108. The Table. 3 shows the correlation between the scores of the two scales.

Table. 3: Correlation of the two tests

	Bullying	Suicide Probability
Bullying	1	.393**
Suicide Probability	.393**	1

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Table no. 3 shows the correlation between the total scores of the two tests administered in this research. The correlation between the scores of the two tests was found to be 0.393 which was significant at 0.01 level. This score indicates that there is a positive but weak correlation between the bullying and risk of suicidal tendency. It means that if the adolescent is being bullied there is a bit chance that he or she might possess risk of suicidal tendency. It can also be assumed that in extreme and exceptional cases there is chance that the victim of bullying might have risk of suicidal tendencies.

CONCLUSION

The results of the data suggest that there is a positive correlation between bullying and risk of suicidal tendencies. This score of correlation indicates that in some of the extreme and exceptional cases there is a chance that an adolescent experiencing bullying may also possess suicidal tendencies. Dieter Wolke, Suzet Tanya Lereyaon (2014) in of their research on 'Long term effects of bullying' the researchers mentioned suicidal ideation as one of the long term effects of bullying. This issue of bullying need to be addressed by school counsellors and teachers to stop the chain of suicidal thoughts in adolescents which may lead to suicidal ideation or bullying as a side effect of being bullied.

REFERENCES

- [1] Sidhartha, T. and Jena, S. (2006). Suicidal behaviors in adolescents. The Indian Journal of Pediatrics, 73(9), pp.783-788.
- [2] Bhuyan, K. and Manjula, M. (2017). Experiences of bullying in relation to psychological functioning of young adults: An exploratory study. Indian Journal of Social Psychiatry, 33(3), p.240.
- [3] Evans, C. and Smokowski, P. (2015). Theoretical Explanations for Bullying in School: How Ecological Processes Propagate Perpetration and Victimization. Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 33(4), pp.365-375.
- [4] Wolke, D. and Lereya, S. (2015). Long-term effects of bullying. Archives of Disease in Childhood, 100(9), pp.879-885.
- [5] Ribeiro, J. and Joiner, T. (2009). The interpersonal-psychological theory of suicidal behavior: current status and future directions. Journal of Clinical Psychology, 65(12), pp.1291-1299.
- [6] Encyclopedia.com. (2019). Suicide Types | Encyclopedia.com. [online] Available at: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/suicide-types> [Accessed 8 May 2019].
- [7] Hailing (1988), Identification of Suicidal Risk in Adolescents, Field Report, The Graduate School of Education, Drake University, December 1988
- [8] Ncab.org.au. (2019). Types Of Bullying | National Centre Against Bullying. <https://www.ncab.org.au/bullying-advice/bullying-for-parents/types-of-bullying/>
- [9] Philip, Sushma Sosha, and Susan Philip. "Anti-Bullying Laws In India: What Parents Should Know."
- [10] ParentCircle, www.parentcircle.com/article/antibullying-laws-in-india-what-parents-should-know/
- [11] Pacer.org. (2019). How is bullying defined?. <https://www.pacer.org/bullying/resources/questions-answered/how-is-bullying-defined.asp>
- [12] Emro.who.int. (2019). WHO EMRO | Suicide | Health topics. <http://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/suicide/index.html>
- [13] <https://www.apa.org>. (2019). Suicide. <https://www.apa.org/topics/suicide>
- [14] PsyCom.net - Mental Health Treatment Resource Since 1986. (2019). Short Term and Long Term Effects of Bullying: Psychological & Societal. <https://www.psycom.net/effects-of-bullying>
- [15] Indianpediatrics.net. (2019). Indian Pediatrics - Editorial. <https://www.indianpediatrics.net/jan2007/jan-25-28.htm> 34
- [16] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281104692_Wolke_Lereya_longterm_effects_of_bullying_ADC
- [17] http://www.academia.edu/22643784/Suicidal_Tendencies_amongst_Adolescents