

Bullying in Middle Schools: Results from a Five-School Survey

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Abstract

Background. Bullying in schools is common. Bullies and victims tend to be middle school age. Bullies have problems with delinquency and aggression. Victims who bully report suicidal thoughts. Anti-bullying legislation mandates anti-bullying education, the content for which will be based on surveys such as the one presented in this paper.

Methodology. 7th-8th graders at 5 schools (Naples, FL; Miami, FL, Palo Alto, CA; Baltimore, MD; Durham, NC) responded to 14 Child Abuse Prevention Services Survey items.

Results. 587 Surveys were analyzed. 4 of 5 students felt bullying is a problem. 4 in 10 admitted bullying someone at least a little of the time. Teasing and excluding are used more often than hitting or threatening. Only 7% told an adult when they saw bullying. Of those who did nothing when they witnessed bullying, 4 of 10 gave, "It wasn't my business," as the reason.

Girls were just as likely as boys to be bullied at school. Boys were slightly more likely than girls to do something if they were the ones being bullied, more often taking the form of "pushing and hitting the bully" than girls who were more likely to "ignore the bully." Girls feel safer in school than boys (82% vs. 67%). Boys more often reported physical safety as their primary concern compared with girls who reported other reasons.

1 in 4 reported being a victim of cyberbullying at least a little of the time. Girls were more likely to ignore or block a cyberbully while boys were more likely to do nothing or cyberbully the bully.

Conclusions. While 67%-82% of students reported feeling safe in school, many reported being perpetrators and victims of mostly non-physical forms of bullying. Over half reported not getting involved in bullying incidents. Students, teachers, school staff, and parents need anti-bullying education.

Methods

	Grades Surveyed	Surveys Distributed	Surveys Returned	Surveys Included in Study
School A Miami, FL	7 th & 8 th	700	496	400
School B Naples, FL	7 th & 8 th	58	58	22
School C Palo Alto, CA	7 th	110	110	107
School D Durham, NC*	8 th	27	23	—
School E Baltimore, MD	7 th & 8 th	116	58	58
Total Number of Surveys Included				587

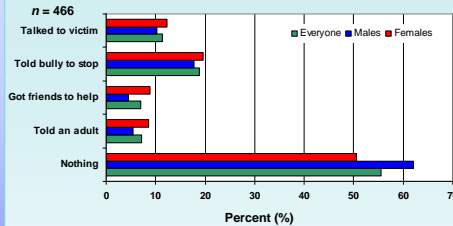
*Results from School D not used in analyses

Results

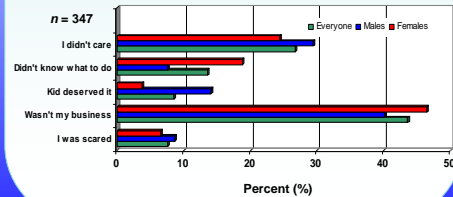
Demographics

Total Number of Students = 587			
Males	42.3%	Hispanic	51.4%
Females	57.7%	White	24.1%
7 th grade	49.1%	Black	12.5 %
8 th grade	50.9%	Other/ Multi-ethnic	8.0 %

What did you do the last time you saw someone bullied?

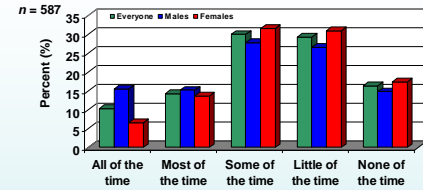


If you chose "did nothing" in the question above, why?

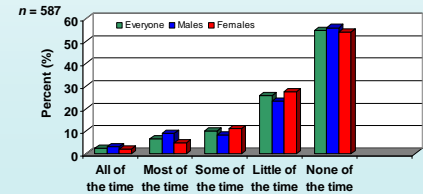


Results

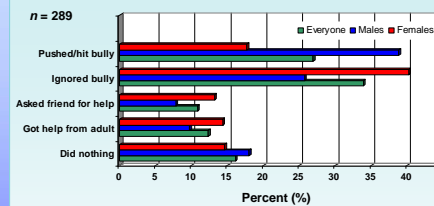
How often do you see a kid being bullied in your school?



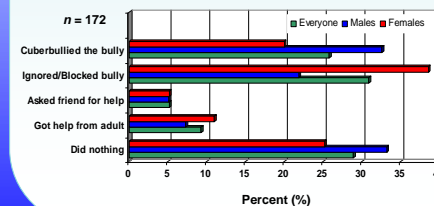
How often have you been bullied in your school?



If you have been bullied at your school, what did you do?

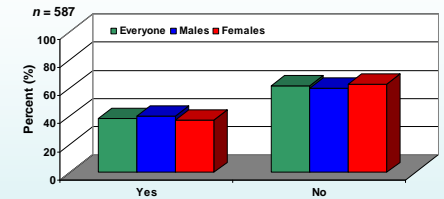


If you have ever been cyberbullied, what did you do?

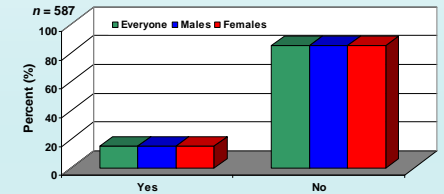


Results

Have you ever bullied someone in your school?



Have you ever been a cyberbully?



Conclusion

Raising awareness of bullying and its potentially devastating effects is sorely needed.

References

- Brown SL, Birch DA, Kancherla V: Bullying perspectives: Experiences, attitudes, and recommendations of 9- to 13-year-olds attending health education centers in the United States. *J Sch Health* 2005; 75(10):384-392
- Nansel TR; Overpeck M; Pilla RS; Ruan WJ; Simons-Morton B; Scheidt P: Bullying behaviors among US youth: Prevalence and association with psychosocial adjustment. *JAMA* 2001 (Apr 25); 285 (16):2094-100

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While creating this poster, "HB 575, The Jeffrey Johnston Stand Up For All Students Act," also known as the "Anti-bullying Bill," passed in the Florida House on April 24, 2007. We dedicate this poster to Jeffrey Johnston, a victim of cyberbullying.

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