

Bullying, depression, and suicidal ideation in Finnish adolescents: school survey

Lesson 4, Teacher Resource 1

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Abstract

Objective: To assess the relation between being bullied or being a bully at school, depression, and severe suicidal ideation.

Design: A school based survey of health, health behaviour, and behaviour in school which included questions about bullying and the Beck depression inventory, which includes items asking about suicidal ideation.

Setting: Secondary schools in two regions of Finland.

Participants: 16,410 adolescents aged 14-16.

Results: There was an increased prevalence of depression and severe suicidal ideation among both those who were bullied and those who were bullies. Depression was equally likely to occur among those who were bullied and those who were bullies. It was most common among those students who were both bullied by others and who were also bullies themselves. When symptoms of depression were controlled for, suicidal ideation occurred most often among adolescents who were bullies.

Conclusion: Adolescents who are being bullied and those who are bullies are at an increased risk of depression and suicide. The need for psychiatric intervention should be considered not only for victims of bullying but also for bullies.

Key messages

- About 1 in 10 schoolchildren report being bullied weekly at school
- Adolescents who are bullied or who are bullies have an increased risk of depression and suicidal ideation
- Bullies are often as depressed as those who are bullied, and suicidal ideation is even more common among bullies
- Interventions aimed at reducing bullying in schools, as well as psychiatric assessment and treatment of bullies and those who are bullied, might also prevent depression and suicidal ideation

Read the complete study at: <http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/319/7206/348>