

# Chapter 15

## Bullying and Public Health Approach

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### ABSTRACT

*Bullying, which is an important public health problem, is a complex problem that affects children and adults of all ages. It is both humane and inexpensive to identify risk groups that may be victims and perpetrators of bullying and to develop intervention programs to reduce risks. Primordial and primary protection in view of public health is the most important form of prevention; policies and programs aimed at provision of multifaceted community education, development, and improvement should be implemented in order to reduce or even prevent bullying in society.*

### INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization has defined health as “not only the absence of illness and disability, but also a state of complete well-being physically, spiritually and socially”. The disease is a “state created by structural and functional and abnormal changes in tissues and cells” (WHO, 2020). But the disease is not just a biological process. It is also a social and cultural phenomenon. A condition that is considered a disease in one society may not be considered a disease in another society. The reason as to why Hippocrates is considered the founder of scientific medicine is that he did not attribute the causes of disease to supernatural forces. Accordingly, diseases are either a violation of the balance between blood, yellow bile, black bile and phlegm within the body or external factors. The causes of the disease can be briefly listed as follows (McWhinney, 1987):

1. Individual reasons
  - a. Disorders of genes, hormones and metabolism, etc.
2. Environmental reasons
  - a. Physical causes: heat, cold, rays, traumas
  - b. Chemical causes: poisons, carcinogens, etc.

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- c. Deficiencies of essential substances: vitamins, essential amino acids, minerals
- d. Biological factors: microorganisms, parasites, fungi
- 3. Psychological reasons
- 4. Social, cultural and economic reasons

Psychological, social and cultural reasons greatly affect the formation of health problems. Bullying, which affects the health of individuals in society, is caused by social, cultural and moral structure of society. For this reason, bullying and prevention strategies and intervention measures have been examined in this section with a public health perspective.

## **DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH**

There are four different and overlapping perspectives in regards to determinants of health from a Public Health Perspective (Wilkinson & Marmot, 2003);

1. **Biomedical Perspective:** Microorganisms and genetic factors are at the heart of diseases. Currently, this perspective continues to dominate the field with the development of molecular genetics as a science.
2. **Lifestyle Perspective:** Obesity, sedentary lifestyle, alcohol and cigarette addiction being important determinants especially for chronic diseases had resulted in development of lifestyle perspective.
3. **Broad Socio-Economic Perspective:** In view of poor countries being more susceptible to diseases, the existence of a broad socio-economic perspective can be argued. The research efforts that became the agenda with the economic crisis have also revealed this perspective.
4. **Community Health Perspective:** Health policies and practices constitute the main roof in the community health perspective, which is integrated with the health promotion model.

This model was updated in 2021 by adding omni-directional arrows to the four determinant layers in Figure 1a. The importance of these vertical connections in academic and practical fields has become more relevant today. Along with the importance of developing policies aimed at lifestyle and individual behavior alteration strategies, multisectoral structural interventions have become more urgent than ever.

## **BULLYING AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES**

Bullying, which has been described in various forms by many researchers over time, is an original and complex form of interpersonal aggression and is recognized as a serious public health problem affecting children and adolescents all over the world. In order for a behavior to be considered bullying, it has been reported that the behavior has to be done repeatedly with the intention of hurting or offending and there has to be an imbalance between the powers of the parties (Aleem, 2016). Researchers have expressed the definition of bullying by combining the common points of different definitions as: a) Bullying is in a sub-group of violent behaviors; b) A variety of actions such as physical, emotional and/or socially negative behaviors are performed repeatedly within a time frame, causing the victim harm; c) Is performed intentionally; d) Generally not prompted by the victim; e) Although a single victim is

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