

Chapter 18

Effects of Bullying on Child Health

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ABSTRACT

Bullying is an important problem that concerns children, families, and society. In this chapter, the effects of bullying on children's health are discussed. The aim of the chapter is to reveal the effects of bullying on the health of children and adolescents in all aspects and to determine the measures that can be taken to prevent these effects. The chapter focuses on the definition of bullying; its types, prevalence; physical, psychological, and long-term effects; and preventive approaches. It is thought that the information in the chapter will contribute to all professionals working with children.

INTRODUCTION

Bullying, which is widespread among children and adolescents and has serious lasting consequences, is an important public health problem. Preventing and recognizing bullying and developing solutions for its consequences are important to a child's healthy growth and development. Early action and intervention can prevent or minimize the serious negative consequences of bullying. Families, educators, health professionals, and society play a crucial role in this regard. This section discusses the definition, types, prevalence, effects, and prevention of bullying.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as aggressive behavior by a stronger person or persons toward a less strong person intended to cause harm and often recurs over time (APA Resolution on Bullying Among Children and Youth, 2004; Gürhan, 2017). Dan Olweus (1994), who conducted the first studies on bullying, stated that three criteria must be met for a behavior to be judged as bullying:

1. Aggressive behavior with the intent to cause harm,

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2. Continuous behavior,
3. An imbalance of power between the bully and victim.

In addition, Dan Olweus (1994) stated that bullying behavior usually occurs without overt provocation and can be considered peer abuse.

Until the 1970s, bullying was accepted as normal in child development. However, bullying drives children to suicide in Norway, which has led to this situation being considered an abnormal and important problem. Studies on bullying started in Norway and then continued in many different countries such as England, America, Japan, Austria, Ireland, Canada, Israel, Italy, Greece, and the Netherlands (Pişkin, 2002; Kartal & Bilgin, 2007; Karataş & Öztürk, 2009).

Aggression, violence, and bullying are related terms. Bullying is a subset of aggression and is considered a specific type of violent behaviour (Kartal & Bilgin, 2012). For an act to be considered bullying, it must not only be offensive but also have a purpose, be ongoing, and there must be an imbalance of power between the parties (Pişkin, 2002; Gürhan, 2017; Dolgun, 2018; Süner et.al.,2021).

Many factors can play a role in the aggressive behavior of bullies. These are as follows;

- In the early years, the caregivers', especially the mother's, emotional attitude toward the child is very important. Negative emotional attitudes, such as warmth and lack of interest, can increase the child's risk of being aggressive and hostile toward others later in life.
- If the caregiver tolerates the child's aggressive behavior toward peers, siblings, and adults and does not set clear boundaries, this can increase the child's level of aggression.
- Parents who use parenting methods that involve physical punishment and violent emotional responses to the child may cause the child to become more aggressive.

It is said that children who get angry quickly may be more aggressive in the future compared to calm children (Olweus, 1994).

TYPES OF BULLYING

Bullying is mostly seen in schools and workplaces in all areas of life, and it is experienced in various forms and a wide range such as physical, verbal, sexual, homophobic, religious, racial, or cyberbullying (APA Resolution on Bullying Among Children and Youth, 2004; Dolgun, 2018). Physical bullying is seen in the form of pushing, punching, kicking, harming people and their belongings; direct verbal bullying is seen in the form of mocking, slandering, name-calling, insulting, and threatening; and indirect and emotional bullying is seen in the form of covert behaviors that harm peer relationships, self-esteem, or social status (Dolgun, 2018; Armitage, 2021). Bullying can be direct or indirect. While direct bullying takes the form of overt attacks such as hitting, pushing, teasing, and threatening, indirect bullying takes the form of behaviors such as exclusion from the group, spreading gossip, and embarrassment (Kartal & Bilgin 2007). The peer relationships and resulting peer bullying are defined as the constant negative actions of one or more students against another student (Süner et.al., 2021; Avşar & Ayaz-Alkaya 2018). Bullying is widespread among children. According to the UNICEF (2019) report, half of the students between the ages of 13-15 around the world (approximately 150 million students) are exposed to peer bullying in and around the school. In addition to the traditional types of bullying, including peer bul-

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