

Bullying and injury profile of female intermediate and bachelor programme students — Perspective from Islamabad

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Madam, bullying among students is a global health problem and entails use of power and aggression; either physical, verbal, and/or psychological aggressive behaviour that is directed towards a student by his/her peers.^{1,2} Bullying victimization has been associated with depression, and suicidal ideation.¹⁻³ There are no studies on bullying among college students in Pakistan. A cross-sectional survey with convenience sampling was conducted among female college students of intermediate and bachelors programmes in Islamabad to study bullying behaviour, and its association with injuries, using a pre-tested questionnaire from March-June 2011. Three female lecturers in three colleges approached students enrolled in classes 11-12, and bachelor programmes, and after obtaining verbal consent and ensuring complete confidentiality, distributed the questionnaires and collected the completed ones. Definitions of bullying and injury, and questions in this questionnaire were taken from the global school-based student health survey of Indonesia, conducted by CDC.⁴ Data were analyzed using R-v2.14. Cumulatively 760 students participated in the study; table 1 shows the responses to injury and bullying questions disaggregated by two class groups of 11-12 and BA/B.Sc. In the past twelve months 120 (50.4%) and 222 (42.5%) students of classes 11-12 and BA/B.Sc respectively, reported having sustained serious injury one or more times, and this was the only statistically significant association found between the two groups. Two most common reasons for the reported injuries were while doing housework or cooking and playing or training for sports. Cumulatively, 325 (42.8%) students reported being bullied on one or more days in the past thirty days, 211 (27.8%) students reported having bullied someone in the past thirty days, 342 (45%) reported having sustained one or more serious injuries in the past twelve months, and 307 (40.4%) reported having felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that they stopped doing their usual activities in the past twelve months. Among

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Table-1: Bullying, injury and other characteristics disaggregated by two groups of classes.

Characteristic	N = 238		N = 522		P-Value
	Class 11 & 12	Class BA/B.Sc	Class 11 & 12	Class BA/B.Sc	
**During the past 30 days, on how many days were you bullied?					0.725
0 days	134 (56.3%)	301 (57.7%)			
1 or 2 days	47 (19.8%)	114 (21.8%)			
3 to 5 days	21 (8.8%)	53 (10.1%)			
6 to 9 days	15 (6.3%)	29 (5.6%)			
10 or more days	21 (8.8%)	25 (4.8%)			
During the past 30 days, how were you bullied most often?					
I was not bullied during the past 30 days	134 (56.3%)	301 (57.7%)			
Rude remarks or gestures were made towards me	36 (15.1%)	72 (13.8%)			
I was hit, kicked, pushed, shoved around	17 (7.1%)	37 (7.1%)			
I was left out of activities on purpose, or completely ignored	24 (10.1%)	35 (6.7%)			
I was made fun of because of how my body or face looks	19 (8%)	34 (6.5%)			
I was bullied in some other way	8 (3.3%)	43 (8.2%)			
Have you bullied anyone in the past 30 days?					0.591
Yes	63 (26.5%)	148 (28.4%)			
No	175 (73.5%)	374 (71.6%)			
***During the past 12 months, how many times you were seriously injured?					0.043*
0 times	118 (49.6%)	300 (57.5%)			
1 time	49 (20.6%)	113 (21.6%)			
2 or 3 times	36 (15.1%)	59 (11.3%)			
4 or 5 times	13 (5.5%)	21 (4%)			
>5 times	22 (9.2%)	29 (5.6%)			
During the past 12 months, what were you doing when the most serious injury happened to you?					
Not injured	118 (49.6%)	300 (57.5%)			
Playing or training for a sport	23 (9.7%)	32 (6.1%)			
Walking or running, but not as a part of playing or training for a sport	19 (8%)	28 (5.4%)			
Riding a bicycle, scooter, or motorcycle	17 (7.1%)	23 (4.4%)			
Riding or driving in a car or other motor vehicle	10 (4.2%)	18 (3.4%)			
Doing housework, or cooking	23 (9.7%)	67 (12.8%)			

Unspecified/Something else	28 (11.7%)	54 (10.4%)	
During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing your usual activities?			0.648
Yes	99 (41.6%)	208 (39.8%)	
No	139 (58.4%)	314 (60.2%)	

* Pearson chi-square test of difference between two groups of students for having sustained one or more injuries or having been bullied one or more days.

** Bullying was defined as "when a student or group of students say or do bad and unpleasant things to another student. It is also a bullying when a student is teased a lot in an unpleasant way or when a student is left out of things on purpose. It is not bullying when two students of about the same strength or power argue or fight or when teasing is done in a friendly and fun way."⁴

*** Serious injury was defined as "it makes you miss at least one full day of usual activities or requires treatment by a doctor or nurse."⁴

325 (42.8%) students who were bullied in the past thirty days, 136 (64.5%) also reported having bullied others in the past thirty days as well, 216 (66.5%) had sustained one or more serious injuries in the past twelve months, and 168 (51.7%) reported having felt sad/hopeless for two

weeks in a row. This high correlation of bullying with having sustained injuries and feelings of sadness/hopelessness in this study underscores the need for GPs/paediatricians to keep their index of suspicion high when providing consultations to young female adults.

References

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