Bullying and Chronic Disease
Tom O’Dowd
Udo Reulbach
Overview of presentation

• Foundations of health
• Growing Up in Ireland cohort
• General health
• Prevalence of chronic illness
• Impact on chronic illness on daily life activities
• Prevalence of bullying
• Factors associated with bullying
• Chronic illness and bullying
• Implications
Foundations of health

• Shaped by
  – Biological
  – Psychological
  – Environmental
  – Social
  – Spiritual

• Health outcomes
  – Interaction of genetic & environmental influences
  – Begin in womb - perhaps earlier
Growing Up in Ireland

• National Longitudinal Study of Children
• Data of 8,568 nine-year old children, and their families
• Generated through the primary school system
• A representative sample of 910 schools participated; the sample of children and their families was randomly selected from within the schools
What do mothers think of their children’s health?

- Very Healthy: 76%
- Healthy, but a few minor problems: 23% Professional/Managerial, 25% Other Non-Manual/Skilled Manual, 29% Semi-Skilled/Unskilled Manual
- Sometimes quite ill/Almost always unwell: 1% Professional/Managerial, 2% Other Non-Manual/Skilled Manual, 2% Semi-Skilled/Unskilled Manual
Chronic Illness and daily activities

11% overall

% of 9 Year Olds

% with Chronic Illness

Professional/Managerial
Other Non-Manual/Skilled Manual
Semi-Skilled/Unskilled Manual

Child Severely Hampered in Daily Activities

0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16

10.2 10.4 14.1

3.3 6.6 9.4

Growing Up in Ireland
National Longitudinal Study of Children
Definition of Bullying

• Bullying is a form of aggressive behaviour which is
  • intentional
  • recurrent
  • designed to inflict pain on or cause distress to another individual

• These actions may take a variety of forms; for example by physical contact, verbal abuse, exclusion or (electronically) via notes
What is already known?

- Childhood bullying is associated
  - with later adult anti-social behaviour
  - with limited opportunities to attain socially desired objectives
  - adverse effect on physical and emotional wellbeing
- Indicator of future sexual harassment, marital aggression, child abuse, and elder abuse
- May lead to a higher risk for self-aggressive behaviour
- It is well known that children and adolescents are bullied because of their race, ethnicity, religion or appearance
Mother interviewed

• ‘To your knowledge, has the Study child been a victim of bullying in the last year?”
• Then shown a prompt card:
  – Physical, verbal, electronic (phone messages/email), written notes, messages, exclusion
Child sensitive questionnaire

• “Thinking back over the last year would you say that you picked on someone (either a child or an adult)"
• “How did you pick on them”
• Thinking back over the last year would you say that anyone (child or adult) picked on you?
  – Prompts: “by showing, pushing, hitting, name calling, slagging (teasing), texting, emails, Bebo, leaving them out in chats, games or in other ways”.
Overall reported bullying experience in the past year (as a victim)

- For boys:
  By primary caregiver: 23.1% (95% CI: 21.9%-24.4%)
  By study child: 40.1% (95% CI: 38.7%-41.6%)

- For girls:
  By primary caregiver: 24.0% (95% CI: 22.7%-25.3%)
  By study child: 39.7% (95% CI: 38.2%-41.2%)
Impact of bullying

Child was upset by bullying:

- A lot: boys: 35.6%; girls: 46.9%
- A little: boys: 50.2%; girls: 46.4%
- Not at all: boys: 14.2%; girls: 6.7%
Most common forms (child-reported):

Boys: Verbally > physically > exclusion
>> via notes > electronically

Girls: Verbally > exclusion > physically
>> via notes > electronically
Child reported picking on other children
- boys: 15.1% (95% CI: 14.0%-16.2%)
- girls: 11.8% (95% CI: 10.8%-11.8%)

Reported forms:
Boys: Verbally > physically > exclusion
Girls: Exclusion >> verbally >> physically
Bully only children – picked on others in the past year
- Boys: 6.9% (95% CI: 5.9%-7.9%)
- Girls: 3.7% (95% CI: 3.0%-4.5%)

Bully victims - in the past year picked on others:
- Boys: 27.0% (95% CI: 24.9%-29.1%)
- Girls: 24.4% (95% CI: 22.3%-26.5%)
Chronic disease, being bullied & bullying others - boys

9-year-old boys

Ongoing chronic illness
- no
- yes

Reported bullying behaviour in past year

Bullying in past year

- Primary caregiver reported bullying
- Self-reported bullying
- Self-reported picking on other children
Chronic disease and being bullied & bullying others - girls

9-year-old girls

Chronic illness
- no
- yes

Reported bullying behaviour in past year

Bullying in past year

- Parent-reported bullying of study child
- Study child-reported bullying
- Study child-reported active role in bullying on other children
Family composition & bullying

![Bar chart showing the relationship between family composition and bullying, with a focus on single parent families with 1 or 2 children. The chart indicates a higher prevalence of bullying in these families compared to other family compositions.]

- On-going chronic illness
  - yes
  - no

Being bullied in the past year:
- Single Parent 1 or 2 children
- Single Parent 3 or more children
- Couple 1 or 2 children
- Couple 3 or more children
Bullying & weight

On-going chronic illness
- yes
- no
Implications

• For teachers:
  • Child with chronic illness may be a victim or a bully-victim

• For clinicians:
  • Needs to become part of the clinical history of children with chronic illnesses

• For Health Policy:
  • NGOs, education & health need to incorporate it into training days & advice

• For parents:
  • Is common, teachers & doctors may ask about it?
Summary

• The most common forms of bullying were verbal, physical and social (in terms of exclusion).
• Exclusion as a form of bullying is more common in girls.
• Girls are more upset by bullying than boys.
• Bullying is significantly associated with an ongoing chronic illness in nine year old children.
• The awareness of bullying is higher in primary caregivers when an ongoing chronic illness is present.
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The Department of Children and Youth Affairs is overseeing and managing the study, which is being carried out by a consortium of researchers led by the Economic & Social Research Institute (ESRI) and Trinity College Dublin.

For more information: www.growingup.ie

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