Bullying and Chronic Disease

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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 8,570 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: 74%
- Sometimes quite ill/Almost always unwell: 69%
Chronic Illness and daily activities

% of 9 Year Olds

% with Chronic Illness

Child Severely Hampered in Daily Activities

Professional/Managerial

Other Non-Manual/Skilled Manual

Semi-Skilled/Unskilled Manual

11% overall
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
Overall reported bullying experience as a victim in the past year

- 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%)
Overall forms of bullying and perception

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 of bullying (child-reported form if bullying was reported at all):
Boys: Verbally > physically > exclusion >> via notes > electronically
Girls: Verbally > exclusion > physically >> via notes > electronically
Overall bullying experience as a bully in the past year

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 & bully-victims – overall study

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

![Bar chart showing reported bullying behaviour in 9-year-old boys](chart.png)

- Primary caregiver reported bullying
- Self-reported bullying
- Self-reported picking on other children

Ongoing chronic illness:
- no
- yes

Bullying in past year
Chronic disease and being bullied & bullying others - girls

![Bar chart showing reported bullying behaviour in past year for 2-year-old girls.](chart.png)

- **Parent-reported bullying of study child**
- **Study child-reported bullying**
- **Study child-reported active role in bullying on other children**

**Bullying in past year**

Chronic illness
- no
- yes
Family composition & bullying

![Bar chart showing the relationship between family composition and bullying.

- Single Parent 1 or 2 children: High level of bullying.
- Single Parent 3 or more children: Moderate level of bullying.
- Couple 1 or 2 children: Low level of bullying.
- Couple 3 or more children: Lower level of bullying.

Legend:
- Blue: Yes
- Green: No

Note: The chart indicates that single-parent families with one or two children have the highest incidence of bullying, while larger families have lower incidences.
Bullying & weight

On-going chronic illness
- yes
- no

Bar chart showing the percentage of students being bullied in the past year based on their weight category. The chart compares 'very skinny', 'a bit skinny', 'just the right size', and 'a bit/very overweight' with and without on-going chronic illness.
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 primary caregivers:
  • 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.