

Are the Perpetrators of Aggression Also its Victims?

Katelyne Griffin, Deshawna Bryant & Dawn Witherspoon, PhD • University of North Florida

BACKGROUND

The mental state of an individual changes because of a traumatic event (Abate et al., 2017)

Due to this change an individual may incorrectly evaluate a situation as threatening, thus displaying aggressive behaviors in response (Verlinden et al., 2013).

Bullying. Bullying is a form of a traumatic event in which there is a power imbalance between the aggressor and the victim who cannot protect themselves against the bully (Plexousakis et al., 2019)

- **Relational aggression**- isolate an individual through rumors or ostracization
- **Physical aggression**- hitting or kicking
- **Verbal aggression**- name calling or attacking
- Females and African Americans (AA) are understudied in aggression and victimization research.

PURPOSE

Examine the relationship between aggression and victimization in a community sample of AA female adolescents.

- Aim 1:** To investigate the different forms of aggression, victimization, and traumatic exposure in a sample of AA girls.
- Aim 2:** To examine if the same individuals are both the victims and aggressors.

METHOD

- 100 AA girls
- Ages 11-14 ($M = 11.83$)
- Enrolled in a health promotion intervention in a Mid-Atlantic city

MEASURES

The Problem Behavior Frequency Scale (PBFS):

A 37-item questionnaire, self-administered, that assesses violent and non-violent delinquent behavior and exposure with the last 30 days

7 factors:

-3 forms of aggression:

- Relational
- Verbal
- Physical

- 2 types of victimization

- Relational
- Overt*

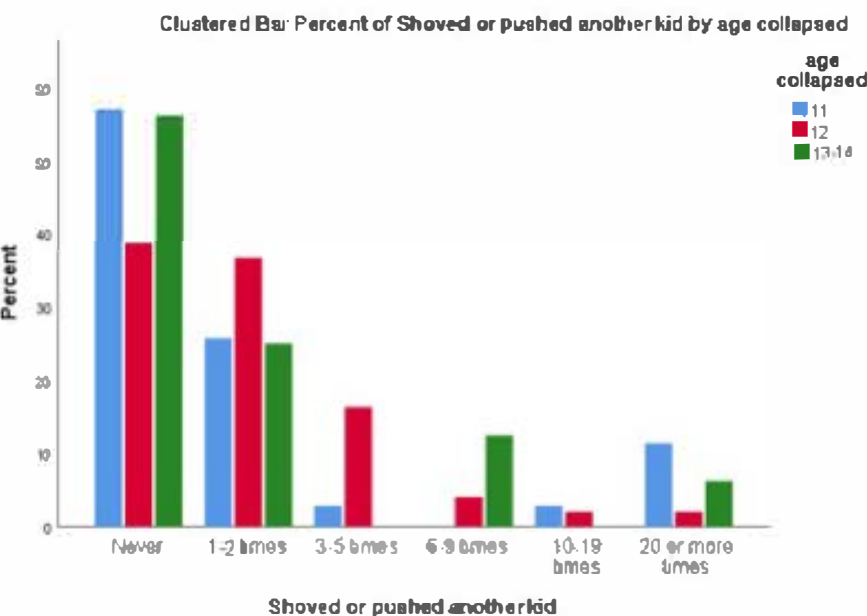
* Overt victimization is made up of verbal & physical aggressive acts

- 2 additional factors

- Substance use and Delinquent behavior were not included in analyses

RESULTS

- Results indicate that many of the AA female participants were both victims and aggressors.



Physical aggression:

- 52% of the adolescent AA girls reported shoving or pushing a peer in the last 30 days
 - 11% of 11-year-olds, 2% of 12-year-old, and 6% of 13 to 14-year-olds reported the event happened 20+ times in the last 30 days.
- 6% endorsed threatening a peer with a weapon in the last 30 days.
 - 6% of 11-year-olds reported the event happened 20+ times.

Victimization:

- 12% reported being threatened with a weapon (knife, gun, etc.)
 - 9% of 11-year-olds reported the event happened 20+ times.
- 47% of the sample reported being shoved or pushed by another child at least once in the last month.
 - 25% of 11-year-olds, 31% of 12-year-old, and 25% of 13 to 14-year-olds reported the event happened 1-2 times in the last 30 days.

Interrelationships:

- The 3 aggression factors were strongly correlated.
- The 2 victimization factors were also correlated.
- The Physical and Verbal Aggression factors were found to have a positive relationship with Overt Victimization.

Pearson Correlations

	PHYSICAL AGGRESSION	RELATIONAL AGGRESSION	VERBAL AGGRESSION	OVERT VICTIMIZATION	RELATIONAL VICTIMIZATION
PHYSICAL AGGRESSION	**	.708**	.807**	.412**	0.180
RELATIONAL AGGRESSION		**	.785**	.397**	.340**
VERBAL AGGRESSION			**	.365**	.259**
OVERT VICTIMIZATION				**	.640**
RELATIONAL VICTIMIZATION					**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

CONCLUSION

- AA youth in this sample were exposed to and engaged in troubling levels of aggressive behaviors.
- Aggressive behaviors and victimization were strongly correlated suggesting a possible bully-victim relationship.

Future Directions

- Include males for comparison
- Increase diversity of sample in age and ethnicity
- Include **cyber forms** of aggression and victimization
- Assess possible covariates of depression and anxiety
- Assess coping skills of adolescents