

# 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\*

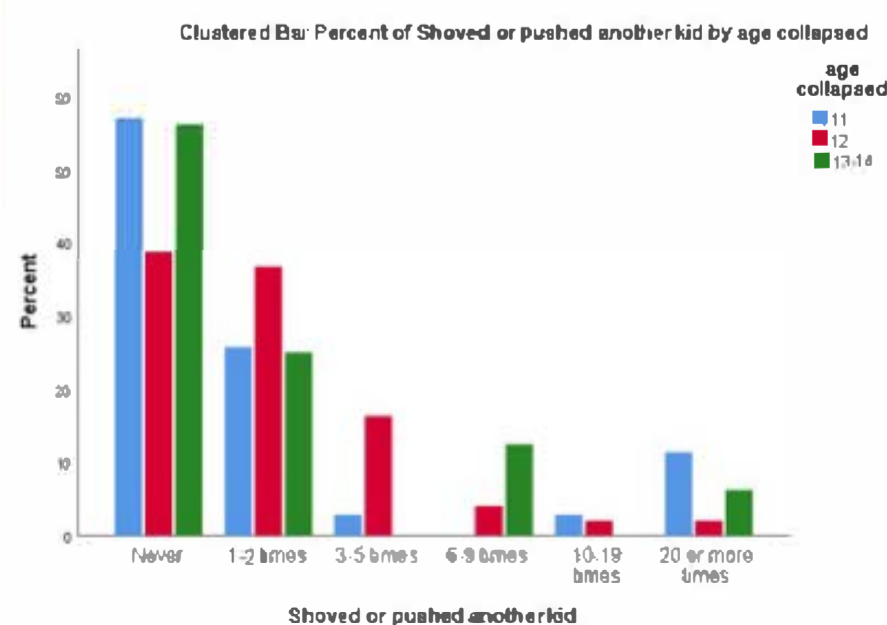
\* Overt victimization is made up of verbal & physical aggressive acts

- 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