



ELSEVIER

Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

 ScienceDirect

Journal of Adolescence 32 (2009) 1287–1301

Journal of
Adolescence

www.elsevier.com/locate/jado

Global and physical self-esteem and body dissatisfaction as mediators of the relationship between weight status and being a victim of bullying

Claire L. Fox ^{a,*}, Claire V. Farrow ^b

^a School of Psychology, University of Keele, Newcastle, Staffs ST5 5BG, UK

^b Department of Human Sciences, Loughborough University, Leicestershire, UK

Abstract

Research has found evidence of a link between being overweight or obese and bullying/peer victimisation, and also between obesity and adjustment problems such as low self-esteem and body dissatisfaction. Studies have also found that adjustment problems can put children at an increased risk of being bullied over time. However, to date the factors that place overweight or obese children at risk of being bullied have been poorly elucidated. Self-report data were collected from a sample of 11–14 year olds ($N=376$) about their weight status, about their experiences of three different types of bullying (Verbal, Physical and Social), their global self-worth, self-esteem for physical appearance, and body dissatisfaction. Overweight or obese children reported experiencing significantly more verbal and physical (but not social) bullying than their non-overweight peers. Global self-worth, self-esteem for physical appearance and body dissatisfaction each fully mediated the paths between weight status and being a victim of bullying.

© 2008 The Association for Professionals in Services for Adolescents. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Obesity; Bullying; Adolescence; Self-esteem; Body dissatisfaction

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +44 1782 733330; fax: +44 1782 733387.

E-mail address: c.fox@psy.keele.ac.uk (C.L. Fox).

Introduction

Despite attempts to curb the growing prevalence of childhood obesity, rates are still increasing (Jotangia, Moody, Stamatakis, & Wardle, 2005) and the stigmatisation to which obese children are being exposed to is also on the rise (Latner & Stunkard, 2003). One potential factor that may exacerbate the difficulties faced by obese children is social interaction at school and difficulties with peer relationships, particularly bullying.

There are numerous definitions of what constitutes bullying and peer victimisation and the two terms are often used interchangeably by researchers. Bullying is commonly defined as a subset of aggressive behavior, characterised by repetition and by an imbalance of power where the victim cannot defend him or herself for one or more reasons (e.g. being outnumbered, smaller, or weaker) (see Smith & Brain, 2000). Peer victimisation has been defined as: “The experience among children of being a target of the aggressive behavior of other children, who are not siblings and not necessarily age-mates” (Hawker & Boulton, 2000, p. 441). Peer victimisation (and peer aggression) is a term more commonly used by researchers in North America. Both peer victimisation and bullying involve repeated aggression; definitions of bullying additionally emphasise the power imbalance, and often, aggressor intent (Hunter, Boyle, & Warden, 2007). Research by Hunter et al. (2007) suggests that the two are qualitatively different experiences for children, with bullying being the more serious form. Bullying (or peer aggression) can be verbal (e.g. name-calling), physical (e.g. being kicked and punched), or indirect (also called ‘relational’ or ‘social’). Indirect bullying is defined as aggression through a third party such that the victim cannot identify the aggressor (e.g. spreading rumors). Relational bullying is defined as behavior which leads to the break up of peer relationships (e.g. social exclusion). Whereas social bullying encompasses both relational and indirect forms and both overt and covert forms, it is viewed in terms of its goal – to do social harm (Underwood, 2003).

Recent research suggests that being overweight or obese is a risk factor for bullying and peer victimisation. For example, Griffiths, Wolke, Page, and Horwood (2005) found that obese children were more likely to be overt victims of bullying, compared to average weight children (mean age of sample = 7.5 years). Other cross sectional studies with older children have also found evidence of a link between obesity and peer victimisation (Falkner et al., 2001; Janssen, Craig, Boyce, & Pickett, 2004; Pearce, Boergers, & Prinstein, 2002). Using self-reports of height/weight and bullying, Janssen et al. (2004) found that overweight/obesity status was related to peer victimisation in 11–14 year old children, but not for 15–16 year olds. In a similar study, Pearce et al. (2002) found important sex differences, with obese boys more likely to experience overt victimisation and obese girls being more likely to experience relational victimisation compared to their average weight peers.

In terms of why certain children seem to be more at risk of being bullied than others, Olweus (1978) found no evidence in support of the ‘difference’ or ‘deviance’ hypothesis (Pearce, 1989; Phillips, 1989). This proposes that children are bullied because of some external negative deviation (e.g. glasses, obesity, acne, protruding teeth/ears). The only physical difference found between victims and other children was in terms of physical strength. Despite this research, Perry, Hodges, and Egan (2001) have stated that, “it may be premature to rule out a role for extreme physical deviations in chronic victimisation” (p.75) and further proposed that these features may cause children to have low self-esteem, which places them at risk of victimisation, and, at the very least, these features are likely to be a focus of the teasing.

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات