



Psychiatry & Behavioral Science Section - 2016

II Cyberbullying: The Violence Behind Technology and Implications for Adolescents' Self-Esteem

Ana Rato, MS, Faculty of Medicine, University of Porto, Porto, PORTUGAL; Celina Manita, PhD, Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences, University of Porto, Porto, PORTUGAL; Ricardo Jorge Dinis-Oliveira, Faculty of Medicine, University of Porto, Alameda Prof. Hernâni Monteiro, Porto 4200-319, PORTUGAL; and Teresa Magalhães, PhD*, Faculty of Medicine, University of Porto, Porto, PORTUGAL

After attending this presentation, attendees will better understand some of the relevant outcomes of cyberbullying for adolescents, which are necessary to know when attempting to achieve timely detection, reporting, and reducing or avoiding negative outcomes.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by illustrating how cyberbullying is a threat adolescents may experience and how this may have a profound influence on behavior, personality, and self-esteem, and can even culminate in suicide.

Today's adolescents are part of the first generation who have grown up in societies in which the internet is an integral part of their lives and is related with many daily activities.¹⁻⁴ With the development of these new forms of communication, adolescents expanded their social network beyond the physical world, interacting and making friends with people they do not personally know.² These aspects increase the risk of a new type of bullying — cyberbullying, which is often referred to as one of the main threats adolescents have to incur. Therefore, the effects of this phenomenon on adolescent behavior has become an important field of investigation; however, there is still little knowledge about the consequences and many inconsistencies are found in the literature regarding cyberbullying.⁵

This exploratory study examines the association between the experience of cyberbullying and the perception of self-esteem, as well as if the way to cope with this victimization is associated with a lower perception of self-esteem. To collect this data, 20 institutions (schools and study centers) of the second-largest Portuguese city (Porto) were contacted and 466 Portuguese adolescents between 15 and 20 years of age were enrolled in the study. The instruments used in this study were the Rosenberg self-esteem scale, to evaluate self-esteem, and a survey about cyberbullying. Results showed a statistically significant association between cyberbullying victimization and low self-esteem. Moreover, results proved that cyber-victims who cope with cyberbullying by hiding the problem and choosing to do nothing present with a lower perception of self-esteem than those who cope in other ways. Schools, educators, parents, and adolescents need to be aware of this form of violence and its consequences. Therefore, it is important to continue to investigate and discuss the creation of prevention and intervention programs that can address this phenomenon.

Reference(s):

1. Berson I.R., Berson M.J., Ferron J.M. Emerging Risks of Violence in the Digital Age: Lessons for Educators from an Online Study of Adolescent Girls in the United States. *Journal of School Violence* 2002;1:51-72.
 2. Snakenborg J., Van Acker R., Gable R.A. Cyberbullying: Prevention and Intervention to Protect Our Children and Youth. *Preventing School Failure* 2011;55:88-95.
 3. Akbulut Y., Çuhadar C. Reflections of Preservice Information Technology Teachers Regarding Cyberbullying. *Turkish Online Journal of Qualitative Inquiry* 2011;2:67-76.
 4. Shariff S. *Confronting cyber-bullying: what schools need to know to control misconduct and avoid legal consequences*. New York: Cambridge University Press; 2009.
 5. Amado J., Matos A., Pessoa T., et al. Cyberbullying: um desafio à investigação e à formação. (Portuguese). Cyberbullying: a challenge for investigation and formation. (English) *Interacções* 2009;13:301-26.
-

Cyberbullying, Adolescents, Self-Esteem