

Conference Abstract

GPs' views about their role when children and young people disclose a history of bullying in the community: a qualitative study

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Abstract

Background:

Bullying among children and young people (CYP) can lead to both physical and mental health consequences. CYP may disclose episodes of bullying and seek help from their GP. Therefore GPs have an important role in dealing with the mental and physical health consequences of bullying. However, there is currently little research on GPs' views and perceptions on their role in dealing with bullying.

Aim:

To explore GPs views about their role in dealing with disclosures of bullying by CYP. Method: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with GPs in England. Purposive sampling was used to achieve variation in GP demographics. Data were collected until thematic saturation was reached and analysed using the constant comparative method.

Results:

Data from 14 semi-structured interviews revealed three main themes: GP experience, bullying in schools and cyberbullying, and training needs. There was an encompassing feeling that dealing with disclosures of bullying came down to a GP's clinical experience rather than guideline recommendations, which do not currently exist; and that bullying was a precipitating factor in presentations of CYP's mental health issues. Continuing professional development opportunities are needed. Such opportunities should include both the nature and health consequences of bullying, including cyberbullying, for which GPs felt ill prepared but which was reported to affect their practice.

Conclusion:

GPs feel they have a role to play in managing and supporting the health of CYP who disclose bullying. However, they feel ill equipped in dealing with these disclosures. There is a need for collaboration between GPs and education services to improve support.