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Cyberbullying: A Review of the literature

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Abstract

Cyberbullying is been defined as the repeated use of technology (internet) to cause intentional distress (discomfort) or to threaten others. The aim of our study is to better understand the impact of cyberbullying on students at school and the possible need for intervention messages targeting adolescents, educators, and parents. Adolescents in school are currently vulnerable of experiencing the majority of cyberbullying instances outside of the school environment; however there is some kind of impact at school. Students were able to suggest some basic approach for dealing with cyberbullying, but were less likely to be aware of approaches to request the removal of objectionable websites, as well as how to respond as a helpful bystander when witnessing cruel online behavior. We believe that school communities should address cyberbullying through a combination of police and educational information that are shared with students and parents. Schools should include cyberbullying as part of their bullying prevention strategies and include classroom lessons that address reporting and bystander behavior.

Keywords: Cyberbullying; Internet use; Prevention; Adolescents.

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1. Introduction

Cyberbullying is been defined as the repeated use of the technology to cause an intentional distress or to threaten others [1, 2]. Now a day's cyberbullying can happen in many forms. It can include harassment in the form of insults or threats, spreading rumors, and impersonation. These activities can be executed via electronic forms like e-mail, instant messaging, text message, social network media such as Facebook, Tewtter, and other websites [3]. Kowalski *et al.*, has conducted a study in the United States of America involving nearly 4000 students in grades 6 to 8 showed that in the preceding two months, 11% of the students had been cyberbully victims, 4% reported acting as cyberbullies, and 7% had been both a cyberbully and a cyberbully victims [4]. Mishna *et al* ., published a study in 2012 found that cyberbullies, cyberbully victims and cyberbully/victims were significantly more likely to use the computer for more than 2 hours/day versus students who were not involved in cyberbullying activities [5]. The internet and other electronic media offer many benefits to the youth, such as allowing access to instant educational information and providing rapid social communication. However, despite of these advantages, various problems have evolved due to the excessive or inappropriate use of this media [6]. This study focuses on cyberbullying behaviors among adolescents who have bigger possibilities involved in school bullying and spend more time in using internet. It specifically investigates the associations between cyberbullying behaviors and problematic internet use, and compares the psychopathologic symptoms in victims, perpetrators, and victims-perpetrators of cyberbullying to those in youths who were not involved in cyberbullying

2. Methods

We conducted a comprehensive search of the peer-reviewed literature from PubMed and found 30 relevant articles about cyberbullying, determine its prevalence, identify its potential causes and sequelae, and find suggestions for its prevention.

3. Discussion

Technology exposure for youth (adolescents) has been increased substantially in the past ten years, with students spending about the same amount of time using technology as they do in school [15]. While accessing to technology has many advantages, but it can also increases the potential for cyberbullying [16]. For the youth, the negative aspects of the internet include problematic internet use as well as online risks such as exposure to online harassment.

Ha *et al.*, and Shapira *et al.*, concluded that problematic internet use is characterized by excessive usage or poorly controlled preoccupations, urges or behaviors regarding computer use and internet access, which result in subjective distress and functional impairment [7, 8]. Psychiatric coincide of problematic internet use is common, particularly in mood, anxiety, impulse control and substance use disorders [9-11]. One of the more common forms of online harassment among the youth is cyberbullying, which is defined as intentional and repeated harm inflicted through the use of electronic devices, including phones and the internet (chat rooms, e-mail, and instant messengers)[12].

The evidence based studies suggests that youths who perpetrate cyberbullying are more likely to engage in rule-breaking and to have problems with aggression. Also, depression, substance use and misdemeanor are significantly higher among youths who report experiencing cyberbullying.[13, 14] Some of the studies have suggested that victims of cyberbullying were at increased risk for depression,[17–19] suicidal ideation,[20] and lowered self-esteem [17,19].

Cross *et al.*, a study of children between ages 8 to 14-years found rates of cyberbullying perpetration were 3.8% for boys and 3.3% for girls [21]. In a large, national study in the US of 10- to 17-year-olds, 15% of youth had engaged in cyberbullying [22]. Rates of cyberbullying of up to 53% have been reported [23]. Research has shown that some students who engage in cyberbullying also engage in traditional (e.g., physical) bullying [24, 25]. Recent national attention to several cases of suicide among youth victims of cyberbullying [26, 27] has raised concerns about its prevalence and psychological impact.

Cyberbullying has several unique characteristics that distinguish it from school bullying. Electronic communications allow cyberbullying perpetrators to maintain anonymity and give them the capacity to post messages to a wide range of people [28]. In addition, perpetrators may feel reduced responsibility and accountability when online compared with face-to-face situations [29, 30]. These features suggest that youths who may not be vulnerable to school bullying could, in fact, be targeted online through unsuspected

4. Conclusion

Adolescents appeared to rely more on themselves and their online community when addressing cyberbullying than has been suggested by prior research. Cyberbullying is a serious public mental health issue among adolescents. Awareness programs and psychological support should be considered particularly among adolescents to avoid possible severe consequences of this growing phenomenon that can lead to suicide. Parents should spend time with their children and monitor their internet usage and ongoing cyberbullying through internet. Health care professionals like physicians, social workers, case managers and psychologists need to be informed about the way in which cyberbullying can occur, the negative consequences of it, and be prepared to counsel parents on how to prevent it. The current study emphasizes the need to receive help from those individuals trained in technology and cyberbullying. Further research studies are needed to further investigate these findings

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