

Cyberbullying and Electronic Media Communication problematic use in Piedmont. Data from HBSC study

Noemi Marengo

N Marengo¹, A Borraccino¹, M Caputo², P Dalmasso¹, P Lemma¹

¹Department of Public Health and Paediatrics, University of Turin, Turin, Italy

²HBSC coordinator of the Piedmont regional school office, Local Health Authority Cuneo 1, Cuneo, Italy

Contact: noemi.marengo@unito.it

Background:

Cyberbullying seems to be an emerging public health issue worldwide. Several mental health problems have been reported in adolescents exposed to it. Spreading of smartphones and social networks in youths, requires to explore the eventually Electronic Media Communication (EMC) problematic use, in order to identify potentially negative health consequences in adolescents. This study aims to illustrate cyberbullying and to investigate whether an EMC inappropriate use could implicate an increased cybervictimization risk.

Methods:

Data were collected as part of the Italian 2018 Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study for the Piedmont region, which involved 3022 children of 11, 13 and 15 years old. Prevalence of cybervictimization, cyberbullying and EMC problematic use were estimated in subgroups defined by age and gender. The link between EMC problematic use and cyber-victimization/bullying was examined through a multivariate logistic regression.

Results:

The average frequency of cybervictimization in Piedmont was low (7,4%), in line with the average distribution in Italy. 13 years old girls reported the highest proportions of both cybervictimization and EMC problematic use (10,30% and 12,08% respectively). Adolescents who reported EMC problematic use showed an increased risk of cybervictimization (OR = 2,45; $p < 0,05$).

Conclusions:

Despite the low prevalence of cyberbullying in Italy, our data showed a greater risk of cybervictimization when the EMC use is inappropriate. Further investigations, starting from the HBSC study, are required to explore the cyberbullying phenomenon in depth.

Key messages:

- Cybervictimization risk is higher in EMC problematic use.
- Public health intervention and educational programs are deemed necessary for a more responsible EMC use, in order to prevent cyberbullying and mental health problems in adolescents.